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THE

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A

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THE
CHRISTIAN OBSERVATORY.

VOL. III.

JUNE, 1849.

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REVIEW.

GOD IN CHRIST. Three Discourses delivered at New Haven, Cambridge, and Andover, with a Preliminary Dissertation on Language : by Horace Bushnell. Hartford : Brown and Parsons. 1849. 12mo. Pp. 356.

It is seldom that a book comes forth with so much of expectation, and of interest in advance, as this. Had it approached us from any source beyond the pale of New England theology, it would have excited little attention. When orthodoxy is assailed from without, however furiously, its friends sit calmly in their impregnable defences, without anxiety as to the result. But when we see one of the garrison, with a lighted torch in his hand, arranging the magazine, it naturally excites some commotion till the danger is removed.

Our personal relations and feelings to Dr. Bushnell are such, that we would gladly pass over his trespasses with fraternal indulgence ; and we could take pleasure in giving prominence to every brilliant sentiment and pious aspiration his pages may contain. Nay, if we were only anxious to court popularity as liberal and amiable reviewers, we must resort to the obvious expedient of glossing our unqualified condemnation of the book, with professions of admiration at the writer's talents, and at the occasional passages of truth and eloquence which intervene among his abounding errors and mysticism. But, for the business in hand, neither we nor this author, personally considered, are any thing. The only question relates to the character of the volume itself.

It is somewhat vauntingly put forth, as a grand contribution to theological science, which it proposes to revolutionize and reform. It now belongs to the public, or to any one who chooses to read. And all that the public in general, or any particular reader, may have to do with it, is to know whether its teachings are true. While it was in its author's hands, it was part of himself. Now that he has parted with it, the book has become an impersonal thing. We shall examine it merely as a contribution to science, which the sea might have thrown upon the shore. We shall discuss it as a chemist might analyze a meteoric stone, which has fallen from the upper air. In matters of this kind, we can only ask for fact and verity, following the apostolic rule of "knowing no man after the flesh."

The oddest feature of the book is the "Preliminary Dissertation on Language." We have waited long for those "Three Discourses." But before reaching them, we must travel through an Introduction occupying one-third of the volume. We are put back even beyond our familiar alphabet; and then are brought through a long and winding passage, before we are allowed to unroll and decypher the mystic scrolls.

Why is this preliminary Dissertation here? Is it necessary to enable the reader of the discourses to understand them? Then why was it not at least as necessary for the hearers, for whom those discourses were primarily prepared? How could the orator venture to address those multitudes, until they had been initiated into his peculiar views of language?

A large part of this Dissertation relates to matters merely literary, and having but a remote bearing upon the points treated in the Discourses. Our author looks upon the writers on the original unity of human languages with a supercilious air, and flippantly condemns their conclusions. He then constructs a theory of his own, to account for the origin of language, containing so many suppositions that can never be verified, as to remind us of the following sentence in Sir Walter Scott: "Here stands Theory, a scroll in her hand, full of deep and mysterious combinations of figures, the least failure in any one of which may alter the result entirely; and which you must take on trust, — for who is capable to go through and check them?" Dr. Bushnell, after briefly noticing the theories of others, and finding in them, as he thinks, too many contradictions even for him, proceeds to

“excite our younger theologians” to the investigation of some sixteen points, forming the main body of the Dissertation.

We do not deem it important to go over all this ground. Suffice it to say, that the drift of the whole is to bring logic into contempt, to make definitions useless, and to produce the feeling that language, which Coleridge calls an “intermediate something between matter and spirit,” is so insufficient a medium for the communication of thought, as never to be understood aright. We do not marvel that this writer should speak so testily of logic; for certainly that science, judging from this book, has conferred but few favors upon him. As to definitions, he holds that they may be “both consistent and false, — false, because of their consistency.” P. 5. It would seem, by this, that inconsistency is the only sign of truth; and this may be the reason why he so much approves of its use. “In fact,” he says, “no man is more certain to run himself into mischievous error, than he who places implicit confidence in definitions.” The only way, then, to avoid mischievous error in theological science is by an indeterminate and unexplained use of language. And yet, strange to say, he undertakes in this very book to give definitions of *justification*, *atonement*, and other important theological terms.

This character for utter uncertainty and necessary obscurity is imputed to language by him for two purposes; the first relating to himself, and the other to the religious public. As it relates to himself, it seems designed to answer the purposes of the cloud with which Venus, according to Virgil, was wont to invest her Æneas, thus helping him to go safely through the enemy's host. Who will venture to call into question the soundness of Dr. Bushnell's orthodoxy, now that he has demonstrated his own speech to be unintelligible? His expressions, or forms of truth, or to use his fancy term, his “molds” of thought, may not look quite right; but we must remember that just so far as they seem erroneous, so far we misunderstand him. This sort of subterfuge may be very convenient for him, but it is somewhat trying to his critical readers. We think that he will not find this privilege conceded to him; and that the common sense of mankind will decide, that if he prints a book in human language, it must be interpreted and understood according to the established laws of language. If language is not capable of expressing his thoughts with precision and clearness, then let him keep silence, till he can

find some reliable medium through which to impart them. Now he only gives us hints, which we are to understand as we may; with an assurance, to begin with, that we shall half the time hit upon a wrong solution. According to his view of language, truth can struggle into words only by torturing itself into all sorts of paradoxes and contradictions, and then it will have but a partial and distorted embodiment. This is discouraging and distressing. We see not how God himself can give us a revelation in human speech, which shall be any thing better than a book of riddles, incapable of any certain and satisfactory explanation. And great indeed is the temerity of our author in venturing to preach and print in any language, without more certainty that he shall be any thing better than a blind leader of the blind.

The other purpose which Dr. Bushnell appears to have in view while putting forth his theory of language, relates to the public. Having argued that language cannot exhibit the reality of truth, he would have us desist from definite statements in regard to the Trinity and the Atonement, and to cease from doctrinal formulas in general. He would have men leave all dogmas involved in mist, and seek for union in a revival of spiritual life under cover of that mist. This is to be effected, by prevailing with the Unitarians to abandon their stiff prejudices against all mystery in religion; and by prevailing with the Orthodox to renounce their attachment to creeds, or definitive statements of religious belief. We are to meet on a common ground of mystery, where all will be so dark, that we shall practically be of one color.

Deeming it needless to tarry longer upon the Preliminary Dissertation, we proceed to the main body of the book.

To characterize this part of it in brief, we may say that it contains, first, a rejection of the commonly received doctrine of a proper Trinity in the Godhead, substituting for it a pantheistic form of Sabellianism; secondly, a rejection of the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice by the death of Christ, substituting for it a manifestation of divine love for man, as the means of an at-one-ment with God; thirdly, an invective against specific statements of fundamental truths, and a plea for indefiniteness in theological knowledge and instruction.

Before proceeding to a critical examination of the book, we shall state some of the general impressions which it has made upon us.

We are of the opinion that if a book of the same character with this had been written by a member of the medical or legal profession on subjects connected with his department of science, a question would have arisen at once whether the writer were wholly sane. The wildest assaults are made on the most stable facts of revelation; propositions are laid down with great confidence and an air of defiance, which, if received, would subvert every school of theology in evangelical Christendom, confute our books of practical piety, — the *Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Force of Truth*, and our practical commentaries on the Bible; make it necessary to give new instructions to Christian missionaries around the globe; and in short, confound all Christian churches with the discovery that they are fundamentally wrong.

There is a daring spirit in the book, which it is difficult to describe. This will give it a charm with many. A certain kind of interest necessarily attaches to a man who ventures, as this writer does, into the mysteries of the Godhead; and speaks as he does, of Gethsemane and its bitter cup, of Calvary and the sufferer. But should an aeronaut in mid heaven hang by his hands outside of his balloon, and disappear from view in this position, admiration at his courage would be prevented by a feeling of indignation at such trifling with his life, and with the sensibilities of men. Any one can gain the notoriety which this author has done, in any department of science, provided he is willing to deny the most obvious truths in nature, and shed the fascinating light of fancy on the system of creation thus broken and confused. This writer, in a humble degree, and at a far remove, is what Berkeley was among metaphysicians, when he undertook to demonstrate that the external world has no real existence, being produced from our minds. Probably the world will be affected somewhat less by the speculations of this book, than it was by Berkeley's visionary system, though the author evidently expects a different result. We owe it to the honor of our science and profession, to set forth this book in its true light, as medical men expose pretended improvements in their science.

We are not so forgetful of what is due to justice and propriety, as to substitute ridicule for reason in speaking of this book. We shall reason upon it in due time. But there is a ludicrousness in it, taken as a whole, which almost prevents us from treating it in a serious manner, notwithstanding the solemn

nature of some of its subjects, — a ludicrousness which will be most apparent to the best educated reader. This consists in the relation of the several parts to each other. The first two Discourses authoritatively, but in a somewhat obscure manner, setting forth new theories; followed by an invective against dogmatism; the whole prefaced by a Dissertation on the deceitfulness of language in theological science; together with a set piece, deprecating with some contempt, any criticism upon the whole performance — produce an effect upon the reader not far from the ridiculous. Were we to indulge in a satirical vein, in speaking of the work, we might compare it to a Book of Pictures by a rope-dancer, containing the following preface: Ground and Lofty Tumbling; to which is prefixed an admonition to the reader, that he cannot be sure at any moment, whether the performer is down or up; followed by a protest against being laughed at, with some faces made up at those who shall dare to laugh; the whole concluded with an argument on the folly of ever attempting to make men keep step.

There is one presentation which the writer makes of himself, which will strike every observing and pious mind, though it may not have been accustomed to the criticism of books. We refer to the way in which he deals with things associated in the mind of a Christian, with profoundest awe and deepest religious experience. He reminds us of the French police officer, Petion, who brought back the fugitive Louis and the royal ladies in a carriage to Paris. He ate an orange in the carriage, in the presence of the ladies, with a certain “*brusque familiarity*,” and tossed the peel out of the window very near the king’s face. There are passages in this book which have made us think of Petion.

It has not, for many years, fallen to us to read a book in which an author assumes so important and elevated a position in his own esteem. Much, however, must be pardoned to the semi-inspiration of a man who is raised up to alter the opinions of entire Christendom. No offence was taken when it was said exultingly by one, — as our author seems to feel that it might truly be said by him without offence, — how much disaster and trouble were borne by the people of the Lord, “till I, Deborah, arose, till I arose, a mother in Israel.” Three great occasions were prepared for him to evolve these “views,” which, he says, “I seem to have had only about the same agency in forming, as in preparing the

blood I circulate, and the anatomic frame I occupy." P. 98. "If they are rejected universally, then I leave them to time, as the body of Christ was left, believing that after three days they will rise again." P. 116. May he not be one of the two Apocalyptic witnesses? He seems to prefer, however, the more honorable mission for his book to have a future resurrection, not like theirs, but like the resurrection of the Redeemer of the world. "Instigated by" an "incautious warmth," he says, "I accepted the occasion offered [to deliver the discourse on the atonement,] as offered not to me, but to my subject." Thus the fulness of time had come, and kings and prophets now will see these discourses, while their predecessors died without the sight. Great ideas have a destiny as sure as the ages; occasions are prepared for them; then they have their inauguration; three of them were inaugurated in that one year, in which our author spoke before three seminaries of learning in New England. Now he marches them forth from conquering to conquer. "Going forth," he says, "in silence, having time on their side, and God in company, they will open their way." Majestic "congress!" Lift up your heads, O ye gates! We have never read a book whose author cherished such a decided and confident expectation of a blessing on his labors.

The author is not unconscious of an unwonted power over the human mind. He tells the assembled clergy of Connecticut, the venerated and time-honored sons of that mother of good and wise men, that "God is a being so vast, that when I drew out the conception of him as existing in himself, I presume it was somewhat painful to you." P. 180. Many of them, no doubt, trembling under his prophetic rod, wished him to "spare their aching sight." He moved before the assembly at Cambridge in a half-revealing state, the prerogative of the ancient Delphi: "You will not require of me to be so intelligible here, as at the close." P. 192. He had many things to say, but they could not bear them then; so the light was let in upon them as they could best receive it. He promised them signs and wonders: "I shall carry you into a region separate from all speculation, or theologizing; and there, what I now dismiss, I shall virtually reclaim and restore." The "Presto" of magic, the "Open Sesame" of Oriental tales, is acted here. He commiserates, as he looks forth from his great mantle, our limited self-knowledge. "Few

persons are aware how intently our mental instinct labors to throw all its subjects of thought and feeling into objectivity."

P. 246. And again: "Many persons are not aware of the manner in which subjective truths, thoughts, sentiments, and changes, often find objective representations, which, though wholly unlike in form, are yet their virtual equivalents."

P. 250. He bestows upon his readers, in this connection, his opinion, that the figure of "God's judgment book" is a good equivalent to our "hidden memory."

He does not stop to join himself with other men, — as when the apostle says, "And not to me only, but to them also that love his appearing;" — but rises higher than this, yes, to a sublime height, when he says, that "the true reviving of religion" is a theme "dear above all others, I am persuaded, not to me only, but to the heart of God Himself." P. 280. He seems like the highest Alpine summit which receives the earliest rays of the sun. "It comes to me publicly, as relating to bodies of Christian ministers, and circles of believers in distant places, that they are longing for some fuller manifestation of grace, and debating the possibility of another and holier order of Christian life." P. 298. "Two great truths," he says, "of the highest practical import, need to be set in the minds of all students of theology and all preachers of Christ, as probably they never have been, since theology began to be attempted." P. 331. Then in a new paragraph he reveals this great discovery in its primal part: "First, that no man really knows Christ, or can learn, or be taught the Christian truth, who is not in the spirit of Christ." The second hardly seems to sustain the expectation excited by the announcement: "We need to distinguish more accurately than is generally done, between the idea of a Christian minister and that of a Christian preacher." The Whitefields, and Edwards's, and Bellamys, and other worthies, from the days of the golden-mouthed Chrysostom, had failed, it would seem, to inculcate the difference between being a mere minister of professional duty, and a preacher of righteousness, baptized with the spirit of the truth as it is in Jesus. This it was left for our author to do. With the same deep impression of the great work which he had been doing in the three Discourses, he solemnly bows at the conclusion of them, and says: "I have given you sufficient reason, if not to embrace, at least, to con-

sider with profound deliberation, the view I have stated. If I am right, nothing is wanted now," — "but simply to recover from this ancient lapse into dogma." P. 352.

A familiar sentence written for a copy in writing-books when we were young, was this: "Modesty is a quality which highly adorns a woman." It used to occur to us whether that quality was unseemly in a man. Some small measure of it would not have been unbecoming in this author, considering that there were many in the assemblies that heard him, and that there are many among his readers, who, it is generally supposed, have as late information on all important subjects, as himself.

Among the most noticeable features of this book, are the remarkable absence of Scripture, and its low views of inspiration. If as many pages have ever been written on the Trinity and the Atonement by a believer in those doctrines, with so slight a reference to the Holy Bible, we are at a loss to find them. We notice in this connexion the following example. The writer quotes from Pascal this string of paradoxes: "What a chimera, then, is man! What a novelty! What a chaos! What a subject of contradiction! A judge of every thing, and yet a feeble worm of the earth; the depositary of truth, and yet a mere heap of uncertainty; the glory and the outcast of the universe. If he boasts, I humble him; if he humbles himself, I boast of him; and always contradict him, till he is brought to comprehend that he is an incomprehensible monster." Upon this, Dr. B. proceeds to say: "Scarcely inferior in vivacity and power, is the familiar passage of Paul: 'as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.'" P. 56. If his piety and taste will characterize this inspired passage, as "scarcely inferior" to the one from Pascal, we cannot wonder at his slight dependence upon the Word of God for aid in the proof and illustration of his themes. Low views of inspiration in the book appear, for example, in the application of his favorite idea, with which the book opens; namely: that the peculiarities of individual minds impart an inseparable coloring to truth. Inspiration, he seems to think, has no filtering or bleaching power strong enough to give us a pure article. Paul, according to him, is a dialectic, John a mystic, James a moralizer, Peter a homi-

letic; and, inclining to the rationalistic view of the authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews, he says: "perhaps a fifth in the epistle to the Hebrews, who is a Christian templar and Hebraizer." P. 70. "There is something of a mystic quality in almost every writing of the New Testament." P. 95. The Old Testament with its rites and ceremonies had, in his view, the same design and use as the painted scenes in a theatre. Its sacrifices were not types of Christ; but in order to get "new types of words" into the minds of men for some purpose to be unfolded in the Christian era, it was necessary, he says, "to prepare them by an artificial process." "This is done in and through the sacrificial system of the Old Testament." P. 103. Thus the Mosaic ritual is a contrivance, or stage effect, to help out a performance; but there was not an iota of substantial meaning in the whole ceremonial law. It was contrived just to create some "bases of words," "to represent, or adequately to convey" "the grace of Christ." P. 103. No proof is offered, no argument attempted. It is as though one should say, that the theory of the circulation of the blood was started by Harvey and his friends, to furnish terms in speaking of the alimentary and nervous systems!

As to the Gospel of John, which seems doomed to furnish mystics with a warm soil for their larvæ, he says: "It is the most contradictory book in the world, one of which logic can make just what havoc it will," and then he prescribes "the only way of reading it." The book which young cottagers and dairymen's daughters read with peculiar avidity and ease, needs, he thinks, a clue to help us thread its solemn labyrinthian mysteries, its whispering, spell-breathing recesses. Adopting his views of inspiration, the Bible becomes some such a book as the mind of Göthe could have produced; and is to be read with feelings similar in kind to those which Dr. Bushnell quotes with approbation as characteristic of that writer, in the following passage: "What Göthe says of himself, is true of all efficient writers: 'I have always regarded all I have done, as solely symbolical, and, at bottom, it does not signify whether I make pots or dishes.'" P. 67. There are some who are pleased with this transcendental balderdash; they pretend to see a fine meaning in it; cloud-land obscurities and tinted shapes of illusory ideas float before their minds; and with oracular and mystical signs, they tell us, as this

author somewhere says, that "the roots of the known are in the unknown." The Bible does not escape in this transcendental, "prismy" method of showing off truths; for the author tells us: "There is no book in the world that contains so many repugnances, or antagonistic forms of assertion, as the Bible." In all his handling of it, he seems to feel like one who is shewing a dying dolphin, or lecturing analytically on the last notes of a swan. The Bible with him is a very curious book, to appreciate which it requires a peculiar order of mind, somewhat mystical, free from logic, and delighting in antagonisms. He shews an affected familiarity with the mental philosophy of inspiration which fills us with mingled pain and disgust.

Reserving for another place some incidental remarks of the same general nature with the foregoing, we proceed to analyze the book, setting forth its doctrinal contents under several heads.

I. This author adopts much of the phraseology, though, we would hope, not the precise doctrines of Pantheism.

His theory relative to the divine existence is this: God, considered as the absolute Being, has the power of self-manifestation, of producing or representing himself in finite forms, which power is called the Logos, or Word, or Son of God; and hence from everlasting there was a possibility of a threefold, or manifold, self-expression. What we commonly call creation was a revelation of God, the first result of this power of mirroring himself to his own understanding, and to the understanding of finite beings.

By a farther exercise of the Logos, God revealed himself in human form, in the person of Jesus Christ; and thus came, more eminently than before, into connection with our race. "There results, at one and the same time, a double impersonation, that of the Father and that of the Son, — one because of the other, and both correspondent or relative terms. As Christ himself appears in the finite, he calls out into the finite with him, if I may so speak, another representative of the Absolute, one that is conceived to reside in the heavens, as he himself is seen to walk upon the earth." P. 169. We are to realize what God is, "by setting ourselves before this personal history of the Father in heaven, and the Son on earth, both as representatives standing out before the Absolute Being, watching the relative history they unfold in finite forms, their acting and interacting, and discovering what is expressed thereby." P. 170. But there is also a development

of God as the Divine power, operating in man, to sanctify him, and this is called the Holy Spirit.

Here then is Dr. B.'s trinity, consisting of three emanations from the Absolute, or three impersonations ; which, however, are three only in our apprehension. Neither of them, singly, nor all conjointly, are God. The Father is no less a mere impersonation than Christ, or the Spirit ; for they all exist under finite conditions, and simply as actors in a drama, representing Jehovah, and personating the Absolute, who alone is God, and, in every sense, is one. Naturally, therefore, does our author pronounce the life and death of Jesus Christ to be "the highest and most moving tragedy ever acted in this mortal sphere ; a tragedy distinguished in the fact that God is the Chief Character, and the divine feeling, moved in tragic earnest — Goodness Infinite manifested through Sorrow — the passion represented." P. 205. It appears, then, that what believers in all ages have been accustomed to regard as the most sublime verities of our holy religion, are but illusions. We have a scenic trinity, and a scenic atonement. How do we know that the salvation hoped for will be any thing more real ?

We need not inform our readers, that the fundamental idea in this dogma differs so little from Sabellianism, notwithstanding a disclaimer on this point, as to leave no very wide scope for choice.

But when we come to the general mode of divine manifestation, as set forth in this book, we find that which is more objectionable than Sabellianism. Its complexion is pantheistic. Dr. B., we would presume, is not fully aware of his own tendencies, or of the extent to which his conceptions have taken a coloring from that seductive system ; but the mien and dialect of the pantheists he has evidently adopted. We are the less surprised at this, from the circumstance that Schleiermacher, who seems to be Dr. B.'s oracle, could pronounce an extravagant encomium upon Benedict Spinoza, that apostle of European pantheism, declaring him to be a man "full of religion, and full of the Holy Ghost." And when we listen to Dr. B.'s declarations, that God will "live Himself into the acquaintance and biographic history of the world ;" (P. 147.) that "He comes into the human itself, and melts into the history of man, through agonies, sorrows, and tears ;" (P. 180.) that "the historic Christ fills them with God as a higher sense ; the divinity in him floods their feeling, and

they receive God as a power, before they conceive his philosophic idea;" (P. 211.) and that "history is nothing but an evolution or expression of God and man in their own nature and character;" (P. 75.) we forgot for a moment that we were not in a German lecture-room, taking notes to the effect, that "God is the ever streaming immanence of Spirit in matter," who "has no reality only so far as he unites himself to finite spirits, or manifests himself in them."

When we saw our hierophant vaulting into the clouds, yea, inconceivably beyond the clouds, beyond and before all creation, and saying of God, (P. 146.) "Conceive him now in creating the worlds,—creating worlds, if you please, from eternity;"—and "in so doing, he only represents, expresses, or outwardly proves himself;" with other passages of the same kind; we queried whether Fichte's theory was not re-produced. Much of Dr. B.'s language reminds us of the following from Fichte: "God is that being which evolved itself out of a principle or ground of existence found in God himself,—out of a nature of God,—or out of a principle, which is indeed not intelligent, not moral, not perfect in itself; but which, nevertheless, contains in embryo, and locked up within itself, intelligence, morality, and perfection; which however, are only potential, only impliedly intelligent, and moral and perfect;—by means of a series of creations, self-manifestations of God, by which nature was exalted, and spiritualized, until it evolved itself into the most perfect personal being,—God explicit; God in the eminent sense; or God in the absolute identity of the ideal and the real; evolving itself from the original absolute confusion of the ideal and real. This absolute confusion, the real ground itself, is neither ideal nor real; yet divides itself into two equally eternal principles of the ideal and real; and out of the combination of both, (by means of the subordination of the real to the ideal, by the transmutation of the real into the ideal,) arises absolute identity, that is, *God!*" We could appreciate the author's remark, already quoted: "In His own Absolute nature, God is a being so vast, that when I drew out the conception of Him, as existing in Himself, I presume it was somewhat painful to you, so remote was it from all your own personal modes of being and life, as a finite creature." Before that, upon an opportunity given to take breath, we had inwardly thanked him, when he said: "Having now

come down hither, as it were, upon the shore of the Absolute — that Absolute which has no shore, — let us pause just here, a moment, and take note distinctly, of two or three matters that will assist us to open what remains of our subject with a better intelligence.” P. 139.

From Fichte, our thoughts were transferred, in reading this book, to the banks of the Ganges. “The One must appear in the manifold; the Absolute in the conditional; Spirit in form; the Motionless in motion; the Infinite in the finite. He must distribute Himself; He must let forth His nature in sounds, colors, forms, works, definite objects and signs. It must be to us as if Brama were waking up; as if Jehovah, the Infinite I am, the Absolute, were dividing off Himself into innumerable activities, that shall dramatize His immensity, and bring Him within the molds of language and discursive thought.” Pp. 139, 140. “Each,” — that is, of the impersonations, or *avatars*; — “each and all together dramatize and bring forth into life about us that Infinite One, who, to our mere thought, were no better than Brama sleeping on eternity and the stars.” P. 173. “The worlds created are all outgoings from Himself, and in that view, revelations of Him.” P. 137. In creating them, “He only represents expresses, or outwardly produces Himself.” P. 146. Here is a mitigated Brahmanism. If we have read correctly the emanation-system, as found in the sacred books of the Hindoos, it is this; The impersonal essence called *Brahm* is absolutely one, yet in himself he is devoid of attributes, and is conceived of as from everlasting perfectly quiescent; but having a power of self-expression, he at length awakes and manifests the universé. The mode of manifestation more generally received is as follows: Brahm, the eternal fountain of existence, by his own energy, — Dr. B.’s Logos, — separates from his own substance a vast number of spirits, destined to occupy forms celestial, terrestrial, etc. By the same energy he sends forth a subtile emanation, or rather extends a portion of his substance into a new form of being, that into another, and so on in successive evolutions. As the rice is in the husk before it is hulled, as oil is in the olive before it is pressed, so does the universe come from the absolute. So far as we understand it, Dr. B.’s theory is something like this.

We are frequently in the progress of the work, reminded of a desideratum alluded to in the Preliminary Dissertation: “There

wants to be a larger digestion, so to speak, of forms in the teacher of theology or mental philosophy." These discourses indicate, we think, an unrivalled gastric energy. Indeed, the avowal is made expressly: "So far from suffering even the least consciousness of constraint, or oppression, under any creed, I have been readier to accept as great a number as fell in my way." P. 82. "Behold he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not; he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth." The next page contains the following: "If, however, creeds of theory, or systematic dogma, must be retained, the next best arrangement would be to allow assent to a great number of such creeds at once; letting them qualify, assist, and mitigate each other." This recipe recalls the prescription which a lunatic of our former acquaintance made for himself, while under the care of a private physician. Rising in the night, he went to the doctor's office, and compounded a dose, by taking indiscriminately a few grains of all the medicines at hand. The next morning his insanity was gone; but he lay at the point of death.

Dr. B.'s avowed hope and aim is a re-union of the churches of New England, which have been sundered by Unitarianism; but his attempts to introduce harmony by a transcendental analysis, are no more successful than would be an attempt to harmonize light and darkness. In doing away with some of the apparent difficulties of our holy religion, he gets rid of religion itself, in its revealed, evangelical form. The same process of solution and eclecticism only needs to be carried out, to convert every church edifice into a pantheon. The last twelve-month, among its many strange productions, gave birth to just such a plan. The pantheists of Paris, it is said, proposed to convert the Pantheon to a purpose that should answer literally to its name. An artist, by the name of Chenavard, was employed by Ledru Rollin to sketch a plan expressive of their object. The following is an extract: "Men of all nations, and of all ages, may enter that Temple, and find there the objects of their worship: The Chaldean, his Star; the Egyptian, his Osiris, Isis, and Typhon; the Indian, his Brahma, with all his Avatars; the Hebrew, JEHOVAH; the Persian, Ormuzd, and Ahriman; the Greek and Roman, their Olympus, with its full complement of gods; the Christian, his CHRIST eighteen times glorified; the northern barbarian, his gods, shivering beneath polar snows; the Mohammedan, who hates images,

his prophet, with his face veiled by a flame ; the Druse, his calif Hakem, with his azure eyes and his lion-mask. Every one will be able to say his prayers in that universal church, the true metropolis of the human race."

II. We proceed to consider the subject of the Divinity of Christ, discussed in the same Discourse.

This Discourse is founded, as are the other two, on the following text : " For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." I. John, i. 2.

Bucholtzer remarks, that " a preacher is known by his peroration." If he have any power of application, if he be not a mere essayist, it will appear when he comes to close up his discourse. It may be said with equal truth, that a divine is known by the exordium to his discourse. The way in which he explains his text, and unfolds his subject, shews us both his correctness and his compass as a theologian.

Judging by this rule, what shall we say of the divine whose Discourse is now before us ? For his exposition of the text, we think, is false ; and the doctrine which he deduces from it finds no support in the plain and obvious meaning of the passage. In transcendental style he prints the word *life* with a capital initial : " the Life." But not to quarrel with this symptomatic incident, the second sentence of the discourse makes an incorrect statement as to the meaning of the text. He says : " It declares that Christ was a manifestation of the Life of God." Now we maintain that the text asserts no such thing, yet the whole Discourse is based upon this assumption. For he says, " In this view, my whole discourse will only be a development of the text."

We deny that when John speaks, in the text, of *the life*, he means the Life of God, any more than when speaking of *the bread* which came down from heaven, he means the Bread of God ; that is, not the bread which God sends to the world, but that which under the symbol of " Bread," is the eternal and sustaining source of the divine existence. *The life* is used to designate one or something which " was *with* the Father," called in the preceding verse *the Word of life*. Now it was this Word, it was this something called *the life* which was with the Father, which is manifested, — but not the Life of God. The author proceeds in the Discourse to shew us how the interior Life of God has been manifested to

men. He has no countenance from the text in his transcendental effort. Platonic as the fisherman of Galilee is represented to be, esoteric as our German mystics describe him, he never ventures in the use of symbolic language beyond a plain and simple terminology. Vine, Bread, Shepherd, Door, Way, Truth, Life, etc., describe the circle of his metaphysical forms. Such an idea as the manifestation of the Life of God never seems to have presented itself to him in his midnight musings on the Sea of Gennesareth, where Tholuck thinks the sensibilities of his contemplative spirit were quickened. But John was not a transcendentalist. "The Life of God manifested," in Dr. Bushnell's sense, would have been as unintelligible to his simple spirit as it is to our New England common sense. Had John said, — referring to the Saviour's words, "I am the resurrection and the Life," — "For the resurrection was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you the resurrection which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us," — who would have said from these words that the Resurrection of God was manifested? The author has converted the text to his transcendental and mystic use without authority from the rules of interpretation.

As we proceed to the exposition of the author's views, in this and the following Discourses, we bear in mind his warning in the introductory essay on Language, that we cannot be certain as to the ideas conveyed by his words. For he says: "Words, as we have seen, never carry, or transfer a thought; they only offer hints or symbols, to put others on generating the same thought, which, in many cases they are not likely to do, unless they have been long enough practised in the subject discussed, to know where it lies." P. 86. Much to the same effect occurs throughout the essay. We are surprised, as we have already said, that Dr. B. should have taken the trouble to write a book, when there is such small chance of its being understood. But he wrote the essay, after he had conceived and uttered his erroneous views on the Trinity and Atonement; and we now regard that essay in connection with them, as a range of hydrants prepared by the author to play on those who attempt to set on fire his wood, hay, and stubble. He will find, in his emergency, that his cisterns are broken.

The author of these discourses rejects the proper Humanity of Christ. In other words, he does not believe that Christ was a

human being. This appears in the following passages. He is answering the common proofs that Christ had a human soul :

“But this divine person, the Christ, grows, I shall be reminded, or is said to grow in wisdom and knowledge. There must, therefore, be some kind of intelligence in him, call it human or divine, which is under a law of development, and therefore of limitation. To this I answer (1.) that the language may well enough be taken as language of external description merely, or as only setting forth appearance as appearance ; or (2.) it may be said, which is far more satisfactory, and leaves the question where it should be, that the body of Christ evidently grew up from infancy ; and that all his actings grew out, so to speak, with it.” P. 152. “Christ himself declared, not that a human soul, hid in his person, was placed under limitations, but more — that the Son, that is, the divine person — for the word *Son* is used as relative to the Father — the Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do.” P. 154. “Besides, this theory of two distinct subsistences, still maintaining their several kinds of action in Christ, — one growing, learning, obeying, suffering ; the other infinite and impassible — only creates difficulties a hundred fold greater than it solves.” P. 154.

The writer, then, believes that Christ is God in a human body, manifesting himself through it without the instrumentality of a human soul in that body. At times we have thought that he might say that he does not, in so many words, deny the doctrine of the human soul in Christ ; but that he only tries to make it appear ridiculous.

We need not inform our readers that this notion, that Christ had no human soul, is contrary to the received opinion of the Christian world. Shall we proceed to prove that Jesus Christ is really and truly a man, “with a true body and reasonable soul” ? Had this been disproved in the work before us, it would be appropriate to consider the foundation of the received opinion on this subject. But without entering into the subject fully, we may observe, that the notion advanced by this author is obviously absurd. Who was it that said in Gethsemane : “Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done” ? Or who, on the cross, cried out : “My God, my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?” And to whom were these appeals addressed ? Dr. Bushnell ridicules the idea of two conscious minds, human and divine, in the person of Christ, on account of the confusion which there seems to be in supposing the human nature to pray, while the divine nature is listening, but no more aiding in the

prayer, than though the two natures were separated by the distance from us of the planet "Saturn." P. 154. Our readers will recognize in this the old Unitarian cavil against the Trinitarian doctrine of two natures in Christ. But Dr. B.'s notion leads to an absurdity, which is capable of far greater ridicule than he, or his Unitarian friends, can ever bestow on the doctrine of the two natures in Christ. According to him, God is in Christ without a human soul. We ask again, who is it that prays: "Father, let this cup pass from me?" "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Evidently, it is God praying to himself. The body of Christ is not like Memnon's statue, made vocal by the sunbeams. If Christ had no human nature, soul and body, how could he pray? How could he say: "My Father is greater than I"?

The beauty and usefulness of the incarnation in its relation to men is wholly destroyed by this theory. We have no man Christ Jesus for an example. We have no "elder brother." Christ, with his body inhabited solely by Deity, is only a theophany, or Divine appearance. The burning bush, the pillar of cloud and fire, may almost as well be our example as Dr. Bushnell's Christ.

When he tells us that God acts the man in Christ, we feel that acting is not suited to the exigencies of our condition. We suppose that the man Christ Jesus was intended to be a sinless pattern for us, helping our efforts to be like him through the assurance given us, that it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren; and that for this reason, he is able to succor them that are tempted, having been tempted himself in all points as we are, yet without sin. To say that God was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, and to hold this up as an encouragement to resist temptation, is mockery. Yet this is the legitimate consequence of our author's notion.

We need not say that this theory of his would make sad havoc with all those sacred and delightful associations which Christians have with the human nature of their Saviour as joined to the Divine. The man Christ Jesus, "the first born among many brethren," the man of sorrows, tempted, smitten of God, and afflicted, — dying, rising, ascending, reigning, coming to judge the world, leading his flock to living fountains of waters, is taken away from their faith and affections. Instead of him they are commended to a divine *nimbus*, Deity *clouded* in flesh;

the poor, perishable part of humanity galvanized into unnatural life by indwelling omnipotence. We have thought of Mary at the sepulchre, in connection with this dreadful substitution of an inconceivable something for Jesus, the man of Calvary, dying and rising again. Mary had far less to complain of at the supposed removal of Jesus from the tomb, than we, her fellow disciples have, if this writer's notion be true. Her Saviour was still a reality to her; but in a more deplorable sense may we say of Dr. B.: "He has taken away our Lord, and we know not where he has laid him."

We may suppose the Christian saying to himself, Then it seems that all my thoughts about Christ have been mistaken. That blending of human and Divine in him, which makes me love him as my friend while I trust him as my God, that mixed affection, so inconceivable to a Unitarian, but the richest experience of all evangelical believers, it seems, is a delusion. I look on Christ, after reading Dr. Bushnell's book, and I see only a body moved by some awful power which I cannot comprehend. His eyes look at me, but they are not human eyes. Human eyes are the windows of a human soul, like mine. Christ, it seems, has no human soul. Deity smiles at me through those eyes, but this frightens me. Deity speaks with the voice of a man. This is preternatural. The whole exhibition makes me feel somewhat as a child feels, when he first sees Maelzel's chess-player. There is a frightful intelligence about it; and so there is to me in that living corpse, that disintegrated man, the soul driven out, and the form taken possession of by Deity. Can God attract me to himself by such an exhibition? Alas! this is contrary to my natural sympathies. It behooves the true Christ "to be made like unto his brethren."

Then it would seem,—the Christian continues,—that my greatest comfort in thinking of death is also a delusion. Christ did not die, as I must. Deity left the body on the cross, but this is not parallel to the dissolution of soul and body in me. True, according to Dr. Bushnell, Deity cried out, acting the part of a sufferer, to produce an effect, to make a manifestation; but I cannot be thus imposed upon. It is not a cry of human distress. I love to feel that my Redeemer had a sensitive human spirit, like mine;—one which instinctively shrunk from pain and death; but which, for the joy set before it, endured the

cross. His triumph over death has always encouraged me at the thought of meeting the last enemy. I have always supposed, that, when I shall pray: "Lord Jesus receive my spirit!" the resemblance between the Saviour's experience of death and mine would qualify him to help me, and would encourage me thus to pray. But if this book be true, I shall have to become an Israelite, and "wait for the consolation of Israel." Isaiah makes me feel that Messiah is to be a man like me. I trusted that this Christ were he that should have redeemed Israel. I cannot even join in the message which John sent to Christ from prison: "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" If this book is true, I look for another.

All my adoring thoughts, — the Christian says, — of the man Christ Jesus on the throne of judgment, are, by this book, rebuked and scattered. I have always cherished the expectation, that when he should appear, I should be like him; that the identity of nature in the Judge and his saints would constitute a source of joy, nay, rapture not to be expressed; and that by this identity we as the redeemed are to be distinguished forever in the universe, to the intent that unto principalities and powers may be known by us the manifold wisdom of God. But this, if Dr. Bushnell be right, is without foundation. That expression, "the man Christ Jesus," is false. There is no such "man" in our author's scheme.

This leads us to speak here of a difficulty which our author finds in his own theory. He is puzzled to explain the scriptural account of the termination of the mediatorial reign. "When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him." He says: "I will not go into a discussion of these very remarkable words; for I do not care to open God's secrets before the time." P. 177. But the plea of modesty will hardly avail the man who has by searching found out God, who has found out the Almighty unto perfection, and who proposes a new Christian theory which is to reconcile all things on earth, and to change the faith of the entire Christian world. The excuse of modesty is not acceptable from such a man. How the Son can hereafter be any more subject to Him that did put all things under him, than he is now, being a mere helpless irresponsible body animated by Deity, is a question which may well be indefinitely postponed.

But what disposal, then, does Dr. B. make of the Word who was in the beginning with God, and who was God. The received theory of the Christian church, is, that the Word, the second person in the Godhead, became flesh, and dwelt among us. What is Dr. B.'s view on this point?

We are expressly told by him, and in language which even his Introductory Dissertation cannot draw into doubt, that there is no such personal or metaphysical distinction in the Godhead as Christian believers suppose is indicated by the term *Word*. That Word is explained away:

"There is in God, taken as the Absolute Being, a capacity of self-expression, so to speak, which is peculiar — a generative power of form, a creative imagination, in which, or by aid of which, He can produce Himself outwardly, or represent Himself in the finite. In this respect, God is wholly unlike to us. Our imagination is passive, stored with forms, colors and types of words from without, borrowed from the world we live in. But all such forms, God has in Himself, and this is the Logos, the Word, elsewhere called the Form of God. Now this Word, this Form of God, in which He sees Himself, is with God, as John says, from the beginning. It is God mirrored before His own understanding, and to be mirrored, as in fragments of the mirror, before us. Conceive Him now as creating the worlds, or creating worlds, if you please, from eternity. In so doing, He only represents, expresses, or outwardly produces Himself. He bodies out His own thoughts. What we call the creation, is, in another view, a revelation only of God, His first revelation." Pp. 145, 146.

The passage reminds us strongly of some of Edward Irving's speculations on the gift of tongues. That a man in his right mind should repeat such a passage as the one now quoted, in the presence of hundreds of ministers, and afterwards print it in a volume, is a fact which his friends may hereafter ponder. Was he intoxicated by the fumes of intellectual self-conceit? He has arrived at a knowledge of the Most High which distances every inspired writer. All that John, even the "mystic" John, dared to say, was: "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." But here is a wonderful man. Where could he have been when the Most High laid the foundations of the earth? We shall expect still more remarkable disclosures from this seer. "Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?" The analysis of the divine mind presented in the foregoing quotation indicates a condition of his own mind which gives occasion to

thoughtfulness. Yet who can refrain from a smile at the profound exegetical remark in this paragraph, that this power of representing Himself "is with God from the beginning!" This is most undoubtedly correct; and what a perfect solution of that mysterious passage, John i. 1: "the Word was with God!" We have all been too Platonic in interpreting John, looking for deeper meaning in his words than is meet, for now it appears that all which John meant in this passage is, that God has a power of expressing himself, and that this power was with God from the beginning. Able minister of the New Testament, who has power to reveal such mysteries!

God having "inworlded" himself, as our author expressed it when he delivered the discourse at New Haven, afterwards incarnated himself, and in about the same way. Stars and suns, trees and flowers, the whole material creation, were one suitable manifestation of God. There yet remained another, namely, by means of the human person, which sin had defaced. "God will reclaim this last type of Himself, possess it with His own life and feeling, and through that, live Himself into the acquaintance and biographic history of the world. And the Word was made flesh," — that is, God, in the exercise of his power of expressing himself, went into a human body, devoid of soul. P. 147.

Here is the resolution of the whole mystery of the second person in the Trinity, and of the incarnation. As we have already shewn, the human soul is rejected from partnership in the manifestation, and God is in Christ precisely like a Dryad in its tree.

The author of this book discards the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead. He feels it important, however, to make out a Trinity; and a curious Trinity indeed has he invented. To deal seriously with it, or with much effort, would be like spearing an Ossianic shade. Continuing from the passage last quoted, he says:

"Prior to this moment, there has been no appearance of trinity in the revelations God has made of His being; but just here, whether as resulting from the incarnation or implied in it, we are not informed, a threefold personality or impersonation of God begins to offer itself to view." P. 148.

Which, being interpreted, seems to be this: There had never been any thing which indicated that God would manifest or imper-

sonate himself in just three ways, till he entered a human body; at which time, some indications are made, that God's impersonations will, in all, be three.

Why Dr. B. should limit the number to three, "we are not informed." But a belief in the Trinity being essential to membership in the Christian Church, and being also a good distinction from Brahminism and Pantheism, it is well for Dr. B. to restrict his divine impersonations to that number. But the manner in which he makes out his Trinity shews that there is nothing in his view, in the nature of the Godhead, which gives occasion to such manifestation. This brings us to his dogma respecting the Holy Spirit; and although we confess ourselves quite sick of his wanton liberty with sacred things, yet it seems necessary to follow him a little farther.

God has already manifested himself in "character, feeling, and truth." "But," the author says, "we want, also, to conceive of Him as in *act* within us, [the italics are his,] working in us, under the conditions of time and progression, spiritual results of quickening, deliverance, and purification from evil." "God, in act, therefore, will be given us by another finite, relative impersonation." P. 171.

Now comes forth the third person in Dr. B.'s Trinity. We have had God projected in the heavens under the name of Father, at the time when the incarnation took place; — the Father and this incarnation being the first and second persons in the Godhead. Now we are to have a third person, which is to be God in spiritual "act."

"Accordingly," the author says, "the natural image *spirit*, that is, breath, is taken up and clothed with a personal activity." P. 171. "Now the Absolute Being becomes a Vital Presence." P. 172. "Thus we have three persons, or impersonations, all existing under finite conditions or conceptions." P. 173.

Who, then, we would ask here, was the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob? Not the Father, for he was not projected, called out of the Absolute, till the incarnation; as Dr. B. informs us in these words: "As Christ himself appears in the finite, he calls out into the finite with him, if I may so speak, another representative of the Absolute, one that is conceived to reside in the heavens, as he himself is seen to walk upon the earth." P. 169. The God of the patriarchs, then, could not have been

the Father.* Nor could it have been the Son, because he had no existence till the Logos, or the power to body forth God, produced him at the incarnation. It could not have been the Spirit, for he was projected just at the time of the incarnation. P. 173. Nor could it have been the "Absolute;" for the Absolute, in the nature of things, does not act. He is "Brama, sleeping on eternity and the stars." P. 173. Who then, we repeat it, is the God who has "been our dwelling-place in all generations?" But to return to Dr. B.'s third person in the Trinity. The eternal spirit, according to him, is nothing but a way in which God "acts," a way adopted by him just about Anno Mundi 4004, or near his manifestation in the body. The conception of a divine personality, or impersonation, called the Holy Spirit, was "till then, unknown." "When David prays, Take not thy Holy Spirit from me, we may imagine otherwise," quoth Dr. B.; "but I think, without any sufficient reason." P. 172.

Thus we have the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, taken from us, which is, however, done more deliberately in the last sentence of the following passage, where the author allows us to apply the word *persons* to the "Three of Scripture," while he rejects that distinction in the Godhead which alone lays any foundation for it. He says :

"Neither is it any so great wisdom, as many theologians appear to fancy, to object to the word *person*; for, if any thing is clear, it is that the Three of Scripture do appear under the grammatic forms which are appropriate to person — I, Thou, He, We, and They; and, if it be so, I really do not perceive the very great licence taken by our theology, when they are called three persons. Besides, we practically need, for our own sake, to set them out as three persons before us, acting relatively toward each other, in order to ascend into the liveliest, fullest realization of God. We only need to abstain from assigning to these divine persons an interior, metaphysical nature, which we are nowise able to investigate, or which we may positively know to contradict the unity of God." Pp. 174, 175.

Now this "interior, metaphysical nature" is the gist of the whole subject; and we are thus informed that this author believes in no such nature in God.

* "There is in fact, no real and proper development of the Father, which is older than Christianity, and here the designation is developed in connection with the Son and Holy Spirit as a threefold denomination of God." P. 167.

What then does he believe? Here we come to a passage which is, on the whole, as worthy of reprehension as any in the book :

"Do you ask then, whether I mean simply to assert a modal trinity, or three modal persons? — I must answer obscurely, just as I answered in regard to the humanity of Christ." P. 175.

"I must answer obscurely!" Up to the moment of reading that passage, we had suffered ourselves to be carried along by the writer, sympathizing with him in some degree, and hoping that we might find him groping his way forth from shadows and labyrinths into the daylight of truth. But on reading his answer to the question, "Do you believe in a mere modal Trinity, or that the trinity is merely a threefold mode of God manifesting himself?" and on hearing him say: "I must answer obscurely," a feeling arose which led us to the point of closing the book. We felt like asking, Is this man sincere? Is he toying with these sacred themes? and have we been trifled with, all this while?

We cannot think that he is purposely dishonest, and trying to act a double part. But we think that we can explain the process by which he was betrayed into this appearance of insincerity and management. He was invited to speak before the Divinity School at Cambridge. The idea seems to have possessed his mind, that he was raised up to recover Unitarians from their errors; a work for which he appeared to himself in a measure qualified, as he says, "by the profound sympathy, and the real respect, I have always felt for the Unitarians, a sympathy and respect grounded, I will add, in a participation of similar difficulties." He, moreover, was endued with courage suited to the work, because he did not "feel the extreme horror of their persons sometimes manifested." Proceeding to Cambridge, he sacrifices the Atonement, as will soon appear, at the shrine of union. He thinks that his old difficulties with the way of salvation as commonly understood, which he had felt "ever since" his "entrance into the ministry," P. 101, would conciliate a fellow feeling; and as he was in good standing in the Orthodox denomination, he was persuaded that he could bridge the gulf between us and Unitarianism. He set forth the Orthodox view of the atonement in a light which convinces his Unitarian hearers that he is not a Calvinist. With some frank strictures upon their views, he offers them a way of salvation which they

can adopt with infinitely less of sacrifice than the Orthodox would be compelled to make in adopting it. The offer seemed liberal ; and he appeared to think that he should succeed in his diplomacy. "For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them ; but they understood not."

He finds it necessary to adjust the doctrine of the Trinity to the Unitarian apprehension, and this he does at New Haven. But there he meets with some who question with him, not being prepared to commit all that is precious in divine truth to his negotiation. They demand of him : "Do you mean to assert a modal Trinity ?" He appears to be troubled with so plain a question. He wishes that men would not be so dogmatic ; and therefore he resolves to occupy his third discourse at Andover with an invective against being so definite in theology. But they press him, at New Haven, for an answer. "Do you mean to assert a modal Trinity ?" He seems embarrassed ; he blushes ; he is like a reluctant witness under a cross-examination. He says at last, in a deprecatory tone : "I must answer obscurely." If he answers affirmatively, the Orthodox will renounce him ; if he says No, he is disqualified to act upon the Unitarians. He takes his turn in "dramatizing." He has a part to perform, and it is done thus. In certain passages he distinctly teaches that the Trinity is merely modal. For example, he denies any original triad in the divine nature. P. 179. He also declares that the persons are three *simply* as related to our finite apprehension. "Speaking in a way more positive, they are instrumentally three, three simply as related to our finite apprehension, and the communication of God's incommunicable nature." P. 177. In this there is no obscurity. If it stood by itself it would be an unambiguous declaration of a merely modal trinity.

But in addition to these, another class of passages is introduced, the sole effect of which is to obscure this definite statement, and to relieve him from the responsibility of maintaining it. On P. 175, he says that there may be more in the three persons than what he has declared to be the whole ; and, finally, that we must not intrude upon their interior nature, either by assertion or denial ; and this, although he himself has both asserted and denied.

Thus Dr. B. has in fact answered obscurely, and yet the obscuring passages are no consistent part of his theory. It is perfectly plain that he is no Trinitarian. In his opinion, God is

not three in any sense connected with his original being. This he distinctly declares to be his conviction. Now it is of small consequence whether he represents God as making three, or thirty-three, manifestations of himself. That which distinguishes a Trinitarian from a Unitarian is this: A belief in an original three-foldness in the nature of God. This our author denies. He is therefore one with the Unitarians; differing from them, however, in forming the several ways in which God has manifested himself, into an association which he calls a Trinity.

Now that we are on the subject of Dr. B.'s relation to Unitarians, we may as well allude to one topic, which, on some accounts, would more appropriately be noticed hereafter. In one part of his book, he seems to think that it was "unparalleled liberality" in them to invite him to discourse before their theological school. We think he is mistaken. Unitarians, and all men in dangerous error, have a quick sympathy with one reputed Orthodox who, they perceive, is beginning to pale his light. Mr. Belsham once wrote to a leading Unitarian in Boston: "I hear that Mr. Jefferson is an unbeliever. If so, he cannot be far from us." This tells a great secret. Any defection from orthodoxy is to men in error a source of great comfort. They have a keen perception of the least appearance of it, — a certain skill in the diagnosis of this spiritual disease.

Dr. Bushnell's interpretation of providence, at his being invited to Cambridge just when his mind had become fixed in his theory, is a mournful but instructive illustration of the delusions which men may practise on themselves by undertaking to interpret providence. He says to the Theological School at Cambridge: "When your letter was laid upon my table, I was at that moment engaged in projecting a discourse," which was "forthwith set apart," with "the text chosen at the time referred to," for the occasion at Cambridge. Pp. 185-187. When Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord, and went to Joppa with a view of going to Tarshish, it must have struck him as a remarkable coincidence, and perhaps as a tacit approbation of providence, that there should be a ship on the point of sailing for that port. Dr. B.'s invitation from Cambridge, which arrived just as he had chosen his text for a discourse against the received view of the Christian atonement, appears to have affected his mind in about the same way. But Jonah lived to pen this instructive admo-

nitition: "They that regard lying vanities forsake their own mercies."

III. Dr. Bushnell rejects the Christian doctrine of vicarious Atonement.

The remarks which we propose to offer on the discourse delivered at Cambridge, will be confined chiefly to principles. To follow its author through all his marches and countermarches, assertions and contradictions, would require a volume. Nor is extended criticism necessary, as the prominent errors diffused through this production, may be easily detected, and brought before the reader.

He labors to set aside the orthodox view of Christ and his work, under every form in which it has ever been held by the church of God.

He distributes the views of those who are accepted, now, as orthodox, into two classes: one, which exhibits the death of Christ as availing by force of what it *is*, the other by force of what it *expresses*; the former holding it as a literal substitution of evil endured, for evil that was to have been endured; the latter holding it as an expression of abhorrence at sin, made through the suffering of one, in place of the same expression that was to be made by the suffering of many. P. 195.

We do not perceive any necessity of separating these views. We believe that the sufferings and death of Christ procure pardon and salvation for sinners both by what they *are*, and by what they *express*; by the evil endured as a substitute for the penalty incurred by transgression; and by the manifestation of that abhorrence which a holy God feels towards sin; and that these sufferings were absolutely necessary, not only to make a moral impression upon the mind, but to render the pardon and justification of the guilty just and safe on the part of the Divine government.

And this, it appears to us, is the doctrine of the Scriptures. Numerous passages might be adduced to shew, that the great end for which Christ came into the world was not merely to bear witness to the truth, to "renovate character," and "to quicken by the infusion of the divine life," as Dr. B. maintains; but to *suffer*, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. In a word, that he came for the express purpose of suffering penal evil, in the place of, and as the substitute for, the sinner; and

being thus placed under the law, in order to redeem them that were under the law, he bore the curse of God which would otherwise have fallen upon us.

But this general view, in both its branches, after exhausting his rhetorical power in efforts to render it odious, and having reduced it, as he thinks, to a sheer absurdity as held by the great majority of the Orthodox, he finally dismisses as unworthy of a place in his system.

He, however, considers it a very remarkable fact, that this doctrine which is "repugnant, when speculatively regarded, to the most sacred instincts or sentiments of our moral nature," which "dissolves itself at the first approach of rational inquiry," which has been "refuted again and again, cast away, and trampled upon by irreverent mockeries," — "has never yet been able to die." And it was some comfort to be told, that in "a region separate from all speculation, or theologizing," into which he proposed to lead us, he would "virtually reclaim and restore it, in a shape that provokes none of the objections" which he had brought against it. But we are constrained to say, that though he keeps the word of promise to the ear, he breaks it to the hope; for, after all, it seems that we were not finally to be deprived of the "venerable doctrine" which has "supported the spirit of so many believers and martyrs, in so many trials and deaths, continued through so many centuries." P. 203. We ought, perhaps, to thank Dr. B. for his promised protection of this abused theory during its perilous journey through that unknown region where neither speculation nor theology can exist, — a region which we imagine must be like that described by Job, — "a land of darkness as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, where the light is as darkness." But we are sure that this doctrine, though "trampled upon by irreverent mockeries," and now wounded more deeply than ever in the house of its friends, will "never be able to die." It will survive this last and most cruel assault; and though it may never appear in a shape which will not provoke the objections of those who cannot endure the idea that Divine justice requires a sacrifice for the sins of the world, it will support the spirit of true believers in all coming time.

Dr. B.'s doctrine of the Atonement is in perfect harmony with his view of the person of Christ, which we have already given. It

is not that the Divine Word took upon him the nature of man that he might suffer and die in that nature as a sacrifice for sin; but that the life of God was manifested in Jesus Christ, to produce a "moral effect upon the mind of the race," — "to quicken the world in love and truth, and reunite it to Himself," — "to quicken by the infusion of the Divine life," — to be "a historic power and presence in the world's bosom, organizing there a new society or kingdom, called the kingdom of heaven, or sometimes the church," — a Presence which even atheists and idolaters must recognize and worship as Divine, and which "floods the feeling" of all mankind, so that they are compelled to receive God in this way as love and power, before they find him as the Absolute of the reason, or conceive his philosophic Idea. Pp. 188, 189, 209, 210, 211.

And the necessity of such a manifestation of the life of God arises, according to Dr. B., not from the fact that men, having voluntarily violated the Divine law, are exposed to its penal curse, and to the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; for there is no wrath or curse, as Dr. B. says, except what is naturally and necessarily generated by law in man's heart with respect to God; — (See Pp. 240, 141,) but from the fact, that "sin, being a withdrawal into self and self-hood, separates them from the life, and, as far as their own freedom is concerned, denies all influx of the Divine into their character and their religious nature," and thus passing "into a state of negation, as regards the Divine, all-sustaining life, they become imprisoned in darkness, unbelief, idolatry, and a general captivity to sense." Pp. 188, 189.

There is here nothing of that "exceeding *sinfulness* of sin," of which the apostle speaks in connection with redemption, — nothing of the transgression of the law as a contempt of God, a denial of his authority, and an injury to his government, — nothing of the holy indignation of God against all the workers of iniquity; — but merely a withdrawal from the light, and an imprisonment in self, — "a state of negation," as Dr. B. calls it, which seems to happen as naturally and necessarily to human souls in their development, as darkness covers the face of the earth when it turns away from the sun. And as it seems to involve no *guilt*, in the proper sense of the word, it needs only the powerful influence of love in the manifested life, to correct the aberration

of the mind ; and to reunite it in holy fellowship with the God it has denied, only because he was unknown.

With such views of the end of Christ's mission, on the one hand, and of the nature of sin on the other, the idea of Atonement in any sense in which that word has ever been used by evangelical Christians, is absurd. There is here no Saviour, who is at once truly God and man, to make an atonement ; and there is nothing in sin, as described in these pages, which calls for any interposition except the revelation of love to quicken the torpid sensibilities of mankind.

Accordingly, we entirely agree with Dr. B. in the confession which he makes at the outset, that "in offering such a statement, as the true doctrine of Christ and his work, he affirms nothing that is distinctively Orthodox ;" and even seems "to rule out that view of Christ as a *sacrifice*, and *expiation for sin*, a *vicarious offering*, which, to the view of most Orthodox Christians, contains the real moment of his work as a Saviour." P. 189.

Looking as well as we can through the luminous vapors of our author's rhetoric, we consider the main sentiments of the discourse to be these :

1. A rejection of "that view of Christ as a *sacrifice*, an *expiation for sin*, a *vicarious offering*, which, to the view of most Orthodox Christians, contains the real moment of his work as a Saviour."

2. A substitution, instead of the foregoing, of the idea that Christ's work in redemption is chiefly upon or in the soul of man, regenerating and sanctifying him, by manifestation of the Divine life, and by other appropriate spiritual influences.

3. That for purposes of worship, to assist man's spiritual exercises, God has arranged certain moulds or forms of thought, or figures of speech, which express to the uneducated the prevailing doctrine of the atonement, but which really mean very little more than was stated above as to Christ's proper work in redemption.

4. That in preaching on the subject we should use chiefly the popular ritualistic language, and sometimes allow these altar-forms to have the effect of literal truth on our own minds.

Our author's objections to the common view of the atonement, are founded chiefly upon his own peculiar and objectionable statement of it. "On the whole," he says, "I know of no definite

and fixed point, on which the Orthodox view, so called, may be said to hang, unless it be this, viz., that Christ suffers evil as evil, or in direct and simple substitution for evil that was to be suffered by us ; so that God accepts one evil in place of the other, and being satisfied in this manner, is able to justify or pardon." P. 194. The central idea of Orthodoxy respecting the atonement, according to Dr. Bushnell is, that Christ suffers *evil as evil*, because man having offended God, and deserved to suffer, as he elsewhere expresses it, " God will have his modicum of suffering somehow, — and if he lets the guilty go, will yet satisfy himself out of the innocent." P. 196. Accordingly we find our author, several times in the compass of a few pages, representing it as Orthodoxy, that in the agony of the garden, and the cross, the frown of God or divine justice literally rested on the Saviour's soul. In harmony with this idea, he adds: " I confess my inability to see how an innocent being could ever be set, even for one moment, in an attitude of displeasure under God. If He could lay His frown, for one moment, on the soul of innocence and virtue, He must be no such being as I have loved and worshipped." P. 199. And again: " If the frown of God lies upon his soul, as we often hear, in the garden and on the cross, how can the frown of God, falling on the soul of innocence, express any truth or any feeling of justice ? " P. 200. In opposition to this, Dr. B. represents it as his own opinion, that God never loved his son more ardently than when he beheld him in the midst of his sufferings. This is the amount of our author's statement respecting the atonement as held by the Orthodox. If it contains an element of truth, it is truth in caricature. The inference naturally drawn from it is this ; God is a vengeful being, and delights in the sufferings of those who disobey him ; — and if for important reasons he is inclined to let the guilty go, he must appease his wrath, by taking vengeance on the innocent instead ; — that when Christ became our Redeemer, God transferred his hatred of us, to our substitute, his Son ; — and that in the garden and on the cross, our blessed Lord was literally crushed under his Almighty Father's displeasure upon him.

With regard to this statement, it should be remarked, that, so far as we know, the expression *evil as evil* is a phrase of this writer's invention, never employed by any theological writer on the atonement. Calvin, who seems to disturb our author so much,

(See Pp. 194, 196,) says: "We do not admit that God was ever hostile to him, (Christ,) or angry with him. For how could he be angry with his beloved Son 'in whom his soul delighted?' or how could Christ, by his intercession, appease the Father for others, if the Father were incensed against him? But we affirm that he sustained the weight of the divine severity; since being smitten and afflicted of God, he experienced from God all the tokens of wrath and vengeance."* God being supreme governor, and a just and holy God, was unquestionably displeased with the sinner, and could not consistently propose to him offers of pardon, even were this possible in the nature of things, without an expiating sacrifice. But instead of literally frowning upon his Son, we have always supposed, that he beheld him in the midst of his agonies, with unbounded love. Yes, and that the deep sympathies of the Godhead with Jesus in his sufferings added value beyond computation to the sacrifice. In contemplating the cross, we have often been sensible of a dark shadow of Divine displeasure. But never did we once suspect, that it was displeasure against an innocent substitute; but always that it was deserved displeasure against our guilty selves. Nor did we suppose that God's anger with us was vindictive anger, or unmixed with compassion; but that it is the infinite abhorrence of evil which belongs to the holiness of his nature, and to that sacred regard for justice, without which he would neither be qualified for the government of the universe, nor indeed be God.

But if we reject Dr. B.'s representations of Orthodoxy on this subject, what then, it may be inquired, is the true notion of atonement; the central idea on which all agree, and which constitutes the essence of the doctrine? It is, we repeat, that Christ suffered in substitution for us, as a sin-offering of infinite value, so that all the ends of moral government can be better answered by our salvation than by our condemnation, provided we believe in Christ.

Our author's farther objections to the atonement are just those respecting debt, substitution, etc., which the Unitarians formerly urged; which have been answered a hundred times; and which without an answer, would hardly make the slightest impression upon any intelligent Orthodox mind.

* Institutes, Book II. Chap. xvi. Sec. 11.

With regard to the design of Christ's work, considered as to its subjective influence upon us or in us, we concede the position that its end is to produce reconciliation to God. This is the condition to which renewed minds ardently aspire. They strive to become like Christ; and when sufficiently enlightened and matured in holiness, they dread sin even more than its penal consequences. This state of feeling and action results, according to Christ's intention, from his life and work as Redeemer.

Nor do we deny that much is accomplished by the simple manifestation of God to man in human nature; nor, that the law is honored by the Saviour's obedience in the most trying circumstances, even unto terrible death. Such submission in such a being, is most tenderly affecting, and fitted to elevate our sense of duty, and inspire us with holy resolution to perform it.

But is this all? Are mere manifestations from without, and philosophies and subjectivities within, sufficient to redeem the soul? Dr. B. himself thinks that we need something more; only, according to him, as we shall shew, what we need may be a delusion instead of a reality. There must be a *seeming* justification, *appearing* to come from without, through the righteousness of Christ appropriated to us by faith. But this is for the uninitiated. What then is "the *true* idea of Christian justification?" What is the reality of that great doctrine which Paul so earnestly preached, which shook all Europe in the sixteenth century, and which lies at the foundation of the protestant Church? The necessity for it, as Dr. B. justly tells us, arises from "the fearful and self-accusing spirit of sin." "An indescribable dread of evil overhangs the human spirit." "Without any speculations about justification, mankind refuse to justify themselves. A kind of despair fills the heart of the race. They have no courage." "They sentence themselves to death." P. 213. How, then, shall we be able to find the "true idea of Christian justification?" to understand exactly what Paul meant when he said that we are "justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood?" And again: "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." What, then, is the idea of justification? Dr. B. undertakes to tell us.

“And here, now, if we desire to find it, is the true idea of Christian justification. We discover what it is by the want of it. Justification is that which will give confidence, again, to guilty minds; — that which will assure the base and humiliated soul of the world, chase away the demons of wrath and despair it has evoked, and help to return to God in courage, whispering still to itself — soul be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.” P. 214.

That which will give confidence to guilty minds, — *that*, then, is justification. If I can by any means obtain a feeling of confidence that my sins are forgiven me, then I am justified. The Universalist who really believes that all will be saved, the idolater who has found relief to his fears by self-torment, the dying papist consoled by extreme unction, the proud pharisee thanking God that he is not as other men, and every self-righteous moralist who thinks that he needs no atonement, all having obtained confidence, are justified.

But how is this justification effected? Christ comes to us in the gentlest form and manner. “No storm wraps him about.” He comes as “a brother to the guilty.” “He calls the heavy laden to come unto him.” “He lives confidence into the world.” We come to him and embrace him, and thus “are practically justified.” Pp. 214, 215. Then his death has its special efficacy in assuring the soul. How? We are invited to the spectacle, — we witness the awful prodigies, — we “hear the cry of the crucified — ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;’ then regard the life that was manifested, dropping into cessation, and thereby signifying the deposit of itself in the bosom of that malign world, to whose enmity it is yielded — who, what man of our race beholding this strange history of the Word, will not feel a new courage enter into his soul? Visibly, God is not the implacable avenger his guilty fears had painted. But he is a friend, he is love.” The nations “dare to hope.” Pp. 215, 216. By these means we obtain confidence, and that which gives confidence, justifies. But does guilty man need nothing more to inspire in him a well-grounded confidence? Most surely he does. Dr. B. himself being judge, man needs the *semblance* of an atonement, though not the reality. But what is there in our author’s foregoing statements to inspire confidence? Christ, it is true, comes in gentle form and manner. But what shall we say of his holiness, contrasted with the sinner’s conscious guilt? What shall we say of the law as he preached it, more heart-searching, peremptory,

and avenging, than when it came amidst thunders from the top of Sinai? What shall we say of those terrific denunciations against sin which often make even the believer say: "I exceedingly fear and quake"? What shall we say of the prodigies which attended the Saviour's death, the darkness, the earthquake, the rising of the dead, agitated creation seeming about to perish under the awful displeasure of its Maker? In all this we see little to inspire confidence, much to terrify, and cast into despair. But when we ask, "What meaneth the heat of this great anger?" and are told that this is the great sin-offering, made by the Son of God, and accepted by the Father, as an atonement for our sins;—that the blood which streams from the Saviour's body is the blood of the New Testament shed for many, for the remission of sin;—that God can consistently offer pardon to sinners, and now does offer it, through the expiation made by the suffering Jesus;—and that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son for its ransom;—then we *are* encouraged;—we cease from despair; we trust, not in ourselves, but in Christ; and are reassured, and restored to God, through him. Now we are justified, not indeed because we *feel* just; but because God has forgiven us, and declared us to be just through his Son.

That no man can obtain confidence in Dr. Bushnell's way, is evident from the fact so abundantly affirmed by himself, that we must have in our imaginations, though according to him only there, an altar, a victim of infinite value, and a reconciliation made with God through the shedding of blood. But now, having learned as we do, further on in this discourse, that the whole New Testament idea of sacrifice is merely ritualistic, and without foundation in any actual transaction, we see not but God must provide for us some real atonement, or some other semblance which even Dr. Bushnell's ingenuity cannot detect; or we must perish. How else shall we obtain that confidence which is necessary for restoration to God?

Our author next proceeds to his objective view of Christ's mission. There is something more, he thinks, in the Scripture representations of *atonement*, *sacrifice*, *sin-offering*, *bearing sin*, opening heaven by *blood*, becoming a *curse*, suffering *wrath*, and the like, than his subjective view comprehends. Something around which the saints in all ages have clung with the intensest

affection, and over which they have shed their tears of tenderest emotion. But what is this attracting, heart-melting something, which calls forth the loftiest songs of all the redeemed in earth and heaven? Is it the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, through whose atoning death, and that alone, we have pardon and life? By no means. It is metaphor, it is moulds of thought, liturgical form, "a divine ritual for the working of the world's mind." And is this the atonement? To say nothing of the fact, that, on this supposition, all Christendom, in all ages, with insignificant exceptions, has utterly misconceived the matter; — and of another fact no less remarkable, that there is no class of passages in the Scriptures which seems to require, or even countenance, this novel interpretation; — the atonement thus objectively considered becomes little else than a magnificent show, a divinely appointed delusion, by which an imaginary altar may have the effect of a real sin-offering. We could almost as soon suppose that Christ himself was but a show. Indeed, if we understand our author aright, the work our Saviour performed in living and dying for us, was rather a manifestation, or a semblance, than a reality; exhibiting a human soul, when, to say the least, it is doubtful whether he had one; and seeming to die in great agony, when, being God in man's form only, there is little or no evidence that he actually suffered. We hope that we may have misunderstood Dr. B. in this matter. But repeated perusals of his discourses on the atonement and the trinity, have left the impression, that Christ himself, as respects his true humanity and his death, is quite as unreal as an ordinary tragedy.

A single consideration seems fatal to this view. To derive benefit from such an atonement, we must not suspect that it is mere representation. We must believe that it is based on fact. But, alas, Dr. B. has detected the delusion, and exposed it to the world. Henceforth there is no objective reality on which we can hang our faith. We have nothing left but "those methods of address which appeal to consideration, reflection, and self-regulation." Man has no longer "a place where he can give himself away, without meeting any suggestive that shall carry him back into himself — an altar form *whose art is so transcendent*, so essentially mystic, that *all art is concealed*, and no occurring thought of working on himself, propels him backward on his old centre." P. 264. Henceforth religion must be chiefly philo-

sophic; and Christianity, so far as appears, "share the fate of all philosophies," by becoming nearly powerless. If our author's notion is correct, was it kind in him to expose that grand delusion which God had so artfully contrived for human good, and thus to peril the best interests of man?

We shall pass over, for the sake of brevity, the fact, that there are many passages which connect our salvation almost entirely with the *death* of Christ rather than with his life; and which cannot be explained on the altar-theory, without violence to language. Christ must be lifted up or crucified, that those who believe may not perish. He must die like a buried corn of wheat, before he can bring forth fruit. He was made sin for us. He bore our sin in his own body, — and he tasted death for every man. Is not here something more than a ritual, — even the actual substance, of which the Mosaic rites were but shadows?

We have another objection to this theory. It is not broad enough to take in the actual phenomena of the Saviour's death. He was singularly meek and uncomplaining in his disposition. Amidst all the scourging and scoffing which preceded the crucifixion, and the distress which necessarily attended this terrible mode of death, we do not learn that a word or a groan escaped his lips, indicative of what he suffered from his murderers. "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." And yet he was several times overwhelmed by unknown conflicts and trials. Once, in the presence of his disciples, when no brutal soldier, or insulting Pharisee was near, he was sore amazed, weighed down, and exceedingly troubled, even unto death. Once, in solitary prayer, he was thrown into such an agony of mental distress, that a bloody sweat burst from his body, and fell in great drops to the ground; and he might have expired, had not an angel been sent to strengthen him. Once, while hanging on the cross, when his murderers, awed by the supernatural darkness, had ceased to insult and torment him, Jesus, crushed and deserted, cried with a loud voice: "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" We cannot account, on natural principles, for this distress. He came into the world to die. He was sustained by absolute innocence, and by the hope of saving a world. Great also in natural fortitude, he knew that heaven and earth were witnesses of his endurance, that the conflict would soon be over, and that a glori-

ous triumph awaited him. We remember too, that the apostle Peter was crucified afterwards, as tradition states, with his head downwards, but without any indications of similar sufferings; and that thousands of Christians have gone through death, in external respects no less horrid, uttering songs of triumph. Under these circumstances, how can we account for the Saviour's bloody sweat and passion, and his last long cries of despair, without supposing that he endured supernatural misery? It is not necessary to suppose "that the frown of God lay on his soul," in any such sense as prevented the Father from loving him. But how can we account for the phenomena in question, without supposing a transcendent suffering?

Dr. Bushnell, it seems to us, must have been deeply troubled with this part of the subject, from the mode of explanation which he has adopted.

"But why is he wrenched by this so peculiar agony? Consider, I answer, that, in the outward humanity of Jesus, there is held, in some close and mysterious union, a divine nature; and then will our physiologists or physicians tell us how long a vehicle so slender is to support the tremendous reaction of compassions and struggles of feeling that are so deeply toned! or, when the vehicle breaks under the burden, by what pathological signs it will be discovered! Besides, this divine-human being, whose interior nature we are forbidden to investigate, is unquestionably a sinless character, a being in the exactest internal harmony, that of purity, innocence, and life. He has never felt a throb of sinful disturbance, or shaken with one chill of death, since he came forth as a 'Holy Thing' into our world. Now, that which is itself the type and fruit of sin, bodily death, is at hand to be experienced. Will any psychologist or theologian tell us exactly how he ought to feel, whether he will suffer less than a man, or more? If innocence shudders at the thought of wrong, more than a soul that is dulled and half disintegrated by the consciousness of wrong, may it not, for the same reasons, shudder with a more intense horror, before the prospect of that complete disintegration, or tearing asunder, which is the natural doom of wrong? If, too, a massive engine may shake, or even sink a frail or poorly timbered vessel; or if a gigantic, masculine soul, knit to the body of a feeble and delicate woman, and, in that, called to suffer martyrdom, might possibly cause it to shudder and shake with a more insupportable horror, than the delicate, feminine soul appropriate to its measure would do, what kind of demonstration shall be expected, when the Incarnate Word is summoned to die? I only inquire, you observe — I assert nothing for the very sufficient reason that I know nothing." Pp. 231, 232.

This is one of the most offensive passages in the whole book. Though this writer professes to "assert nothing," he evidently

intends to suggest an explanation of those wonderful sufferings. And what is it? Why, it is perfect innocence shuddering at death, because death is among the consequences of sin. But, according to Dr. B.'s own theory, must not perfect innocence have been sustained by its conscious virtue, and by the smiles of an ever-present, approving God? In this portion of the paragraph, we have a real, human Jesus in the person of the Son. But with a singular confusion of ideas, the same passage fills out the explanation with a totally different, if not contradictory, hypothesis. What are these manifestations of suffering now, but an infinite energy working in and rending a finite frailty? We have no longer the Son crying unto the Father; but we have Deity himself shattering the human body of Jesus, in his efforts to shew forth his love to man. And what is this but artistic representation, played off only for effect, before the world? But there is another objection to this truly shocking hypothesis. The concealed sufferings of Christ were entirely mental. His *soul* was exceedingly troubled: his agony appeared in the prayer, that a cup of suffering might pass from him. And, what is more to the point, "when he had offered prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death," he "was heard in that he feared." Does this look like the Godhead shattering the manhood of Jesus? Or is it Christ, crying to his Almighty Father for help, and receiving the relief which he sought?

The same remarks may be made in respect to those loud lamentations on the cross. It was inward, mental suffering, the withdrawal of the Father from his dying Son, and not the actings of the infinite through the finite, which called forth the cry, "Why hast thou forsaken me!" If Dr. Bushnell's theory could be tolerated as respects the life of Christ, it is wholly unsatisfactory, not to say horrible, as an explanation of his death.

Christ's work, says Dr. B., "is more a poem than a treatise. It classes as a work of Art, more than as a work of Science. It addresses the understanding, in great part, through the feeling or sensibility. In these it has its receptivities, by these it is perceived, or perceivable." It is "a tragedy distinguished in the fact that God is the Chief Character, and the divine feeling, moved in tragic earnest — Goodness Infinite manifested through Sorrow — the passion represented." And he thinks that "it

would not be as wild a breach of philosophy itself, to undertake a dogmatic statement of the contents of a tragedy, as to attempt giving in the same manner the equivalents of the life and death of Jesus Christ." Pp. 204, 205. Dismissing "all speculation about the mode, possibility, interior reality of this suffering;" and understanding "that God has proposed, in this manner, to express His love;" then "all logical, theological, ontological, physiological questions are, by the supposition, out of place." We must "come to the spectacle of Christ's suffering life and death, as to a mystery wholly transcendent, save in what it expresses of Divine feeling." So much "of this feeling as we receive," we must "call the reality; all else is the *machina Dei*," the stage adjustments and decorations, "for the expression of this." P. 215.

It is thus, as Dr. B. maintains, that Christ "fulfills the office of a sacrifice, of which so much is said in the scripture." P. 221. The whole system of sacrifices under the law, which all Christians have hitherto regarded as typifying a real sacrifice that would take away sin, was, according to this writer, a mere drama, prepared and performed in presence of the Jews, not that God might be appeased by the smell of a sacrifice; not to effect, in any sense, an atonement or propitiation for sin; not to lead the worshipper to embrace the atonement of Christ typified in his sacrifice; not to transfer a merited punishment to an innocent victim substituted in the place of the offender;—but as a grand scenic display, a dramatic liturgy, designed to have a renovating power over the character, somewhat as the manifested life in Christ is designed to have;—and also to prepare correspondences, and forms of language, by which the more spiritual grace of the incarnate Redeemer may be represented. Pp. 224, 225.

Thus the choice of an unblemished animal, "the confession of sin upon his head before the altar; the solemn formalities of the slaughter and preparation of the sacrifice; the sacred blood sprinkled before the veil that is closed against unholy feet, the horns of the altar touched with blood, and the remainder poured out before it on the ground; the fire kindled, and the smoke of the victim rolling up before the eyes of the worshipper to heaven," the scape-goat bearing the sins of the people into the wilderness, the living bird dipped in the warm blood of its mate, the sprinkling of blood upon the people,—are all parts of "an

artistic plan to impress on the mind a sense of the holiness of God's character and the sacred authority of His government." P. 233. Why might not the awful scene upon Sinai, with its smoke, and fire, and trumpets, and the voice of words, so terrible that even Moses feared and quaked, have been a part of the same artistic plan, — the first scene in that tremendous drama, by which God, "the Chief Character," manifested his feelings toward his people?

"The sacrifices and other Jewish machineries are gone," says Dr. B., "yet they are all here — indeed they never found their true significance, till Christ came and took them up into their higher use, as vehicles of his divine truth." P. 249. The old theatre is shut up, but its wardrobe and scenic apparatus are transferred to Christianity. The stage is now Calvary, — the "Chief Character" is God, expressing his feelings through the apparent agony, and desertion, and overwhelming sorrow of a victim in the form of man, — the incidents are the sun covered with sackcloth, the earth shuddering as in throes of death, and the graves giving up their dead; — the spectators are a world assembled to be "flooded with rivers of divine feeling" represented by this stupendous drama, and to be restored to the love of God by its quickening power. It seems to be an awful sacrifice, but it is only "the most moving tragedy ever acted in this mortal sphere." There seem to be mortal agonies, as of a man bearing the world's iniquities in his own body on the tree; but it is only God acting a part, for the sake of the impression which these frightful representations will make upon the spectators. There seems to be one hanging upon that cross like ourselves, smitten of God for our salvation, by whose stripes of deeply experienced personal pain, we are healed; but it is only that "peculiar power in the divine nature, by which God is able to represent himself outwardly in the forms of things, first in the world, and now in the human person," apparently in a state of deepest woe.

Christians have stood from age to age trembling and weeping before that appalling spectacle, supposing that this Jesus was he who, by the shedding of his own blood as a sacrifice for sin, should have redeemed Israel. But they have been deceived into a salutary belief by the most consummate art; and have shed their tears of godly sorrow over a well acted tragedy! They have witnessed "the patience of his trial," the "meekness of his

submission to injustice," the "malignant passions of his foes," the victim himself, as well as the "creation, darkening and shuddering, with a horror of sensibility," the "life that was manifested, dropping into cessation;" and have felt a blessed hope spring up in their hearts, believing that Christ gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savor, and that by becoming a curse he had saved them from a merited doom; but it was only the malignity of a race exasperated by the presence of obligation, breaking itself across an image of divine patience. So effectually is the "sublime art of Christianity concealed from us," that "we do not conceive it as art, but only as a didactic power, a doctrine, a divine philosophy." P. 250. The drama was so well enacted, and all seemed so real, that all generations have gone away, some smiting their breasts, and some wagging their heads; not dreaming that it was a mere show of divine feeling which was in this way seeking to quicken a dead world to the life of God.

This lecturer upon divine æsthetics tells us, that it is forbidden us to inquire into the interior life of Jesus. Why then has he opened before us the whole interior of this mighty drama, and forced us to see the art which God had so carefully and wisely concealed from us, — the machinery and painting by which the design of the contrivance is to be realized? He tells us that this scene was intended to have a "marvelous power over our impressions, concerning ourselves and our sins, the law of God and His character. It brings an element of divinity into every thing, sheds an air of solemnity and grandeur over every thing. It is even more awful to the guilty conscience itself, than the thunders of Sinai." P. 236. But it can produce this effect only so long as the art is concealed, and the spectator believes that the scene is just the reality it professes to be. As soon as it comes to be regarded as a scene in which the feelings of God are dramatized, in which there is no human soul to bend under the weight of divine justice, and of course, no suffering that can bring the visible actor into any relation of sympathy with sinners, — the whole moral power of the contrivance is lost; and "the centurion in the heart," who had exclaimed in terror and in penitence: "Truly, this was the Son of God," corrects himself and says, It is, after all, only the peculiar power in the divinity, by which God is able to represent himself as suffering and dying before us.

Dr. B. entitles his book "God in Christ;" but, in accordance with the view which he has given of the nature of the atonement, as a dramatic representation, it should rather be God AS Christ, performing the part of a suffering Messiah, in order to take away the fear of wrath which sin awakens in the soul.

We do not think that any man, saint or sinner, can be morally benefited by this explanation of Christ's work. Such an atonement cannot express God's abhorrence of sin, nor magnify the law in the sight of the universe, nor render it any more just for God to pardon the guilty than without such a display, nor bring sinners to repentance, nor renovate character by forming a crucified Saviour in the soul. And no Christian who has found, as he hopes, reconciliation and peace through the atoning blood of the cross, will thank this writer for endeavoring to convince him that he has been totally mistaken in relation to the nature and design of Christ's suffering. We cannot be grateful to any one who would take from us our faith in the reality of the atonement. We may give him credit for his talents, for his industry, and his earnest desire to contribute his mite to the theological knowledge of the age. We may sympathize with him in his desire to see the church, throwing aside its prejudices, and mere forms of godliness, rise into a higher region of spiritual life, and enter more fully into God's plan. But all this goes for nothing with us, when we see that he aims to secure his purpose through a theory or dogma, which takes away the Christ of our love, and hope, and worship, and gives us another gospel in which we can find neither a foundation for hope, nor a power to save.

With regard to the final question, How ought Christ to be preached? our author answers in effect, just as if the atonement were a reality, instead of the philosophic at-one-ment, and the artistic "altar form," he had so laboriously taught. P. 271. This method must be adopted at least for the common people. They need a sacrifice, a sin-offering, an atonement, a justification out of themselves in Christ. The speculative vagaries of this discourse, — what could our unlearned laics make of them? A "sad figure," Dr. B. tells us, P. 267, "would be made by the rude masses of the world, in applying a gospel of philosophic causes to their own nature; for they hardly know, as yet, that they have a nature. How manifest it is that they want an altar, set up before them, and if they cannot quite see the blood of Christ

sprinkled on it, they must have it as a FORM in their souls; he must be a stock of righteousness before them; he must bear their sins for them, and be, in fact, their religion;” — “and seeing now their new peace, not in themselves where it is, but in God, they rejoice that God is reconciled, and His anger smoothed away.” P. 267. That is, the common people must have just such an atonement as the Orthodox churches have usually preached; they must have Christ for the great sacrifice, Christ making expiation for sin by the sprinkling of his blood before the throne; Christ their righteousness; Christ bearing their sins, being their religion, and smoothing the anger of God towards them away. What an amazing admission have we here! It seems that the received doctrine of the atonement is not so horrible after all! These formidable objections which never can be explained away, appear now to be objections only to the learned. The common people see nothing inconsistent with the justice of God, in his permitting the innocent Jesus to suffer in the place of sinful men. It does not shock them that Christ bears their sins, honors the violated law by his expiatory sufferings, makes provision for their salvation, becomes their righteousness, and even appeases the anger of God towards them by his blood. Nay, they must have just such a religion as the orthodox ministry has usually taught. This is so necessary, that God himself has provided a grand delusion for the masses, whereby for the salvation of their souls, they may believe in an atonement which is utterly untrue. Let no one say, that this seems to impute immorality to God. Necessity is above law. Man must be deluded, or he cannot be saved. “If the soul is ever to get her health and freedom in goodness, she must have the gospel, not as a doctrine only, but as a rite before her, a righteousness, a ransom, a sacrifice, a lamb slain, a blood offered for her cleansing before Jehovah’s altar.” P. 266. This delusion is designed chiefly, indeed, for the common people, but not entirely. The most philosophical, if they would enjoy spiritual peace, and make progress in sanctification, must sometimes believe the great falsehood. They “will need often to go back to this holy altar of feeling, and hang there, trusting in Christ’s offering.” P. 271. “We need, all alike, some objective religion; to come and hang ourselves upon the altar of sacrifice sprinkled by the blood of Jesus, to enter into the holiest set open by his death, to quiet our

soul in his peace, clothe it in his righteousness, and trust him as the Lamb of God that taketh away our sin. In these simple, unselfish, unreflective exercises, we shall make our closest approach to God." P. 268. We read these quotations with amazement. They affect us strangely. We hardly know whether to smile or weep. We are to preach an atonement which is perfectly shocking if it is reality, but supremely glorious if it is a delusion. We are to tell the people that Christ in reality is not a sin-offering, nor a ransom, nor a substitute for us ; but we wish them to forget this truth, and to believe, for the time being, that he is all these ; since upon such belief, used for the ritualistic working of their minds, depends the health of their souls. Nay, we must all invoke upon ourselves a strong delusion to believe a lie, that we all may be saved. Certainly this is a strange vagary ! Dr. B. takes the soul out of our religion, and then presenting us with the cold corpse, tells us to converse with it, and think it alive ; as our salvation depends on this self-imposition.

But passing this point, will our author tell us how we are to make ourselves, or our people, believe that we have an objective ransom, sacrifice, and sin-offering in Christ, when both we and they fully understand that we have in truth no such thing. Can we, as men of sincerity, teach for doctrines, even to the common people, what we know to be false ? How can we weep at the Lord's table over his atoning death, when we know that he neither experienced the death, nor made the atonement supposed ?

We cannot think that sincere-minded Unitarians, for whose special edification and comfort the theory before us seems to have been constructed, will be disposed to adopt this mode of preaching. It is too hollow, too dishonest ! Stripped of all disguise, it amounts to this : Use Orthodox language, with a mentally reserved Unitarian interpretation. And what is this but preaching as Blanco White and others of that class have done ; or, as the Puseyites express it, in a " non-natural sense " ?

Some error with respect to other matters may be taught with comparative safety to the church ; but he who mistakes this doctrine, or in his experiments mingles a worldly philosophy with this wisdom of God in a mystery, poisons theology at its fountain-head, and spreads moral death through the community.

We took up this discourse, in the hope that the reports which we had heard respecting it might be found untrue ; and that

although given to a somewhat reckless mode of speculating upon Divine things, the author might here, at least, utter the words of truth and soberness. But when we read, in his introductory remarks, the confession that he had preached the gospel for many years without any definite view of what is called theologically the doctrine of the Atonement, — that it had been “hung up before him,” as a somewhat unintelligible specimen of dogmatic theology, for “manifold experiments,” we confess that we were astonished at the presumption of a man who had so long dared to preach the gospel, in ignorance of its principal doctrine. And when we were told that “now, at last, the question had seemed to open itself, and to display its resources” to his mind; that he had embodied in this discourse what he hoped would “prove a true solution of this momentous but very difficult subject,” and lead to a “reconstruction of our present theological affinities;” that he had found at last the key to that mystery “over which our fathers panted in the dust of controversy in vain;” and that he had been providentially furnished with an occasion of illuminating the darkness of the age with his newly discovered light; — there was a feeling in our mind that we shall not attempt to express. Since the publication of this volume, and from the manner in which it has been received, it is probable that the apprehensions which, as he intimates, had begun to rise in his mind at the time of delivery, have been partially realized. His confidence in the speedy adoption of his theory, and the reconstruction of our present theological affinities, must, by this time, have become “somewhat sobered;” and he no longer, we presume, “dreams of the possibility that he shall be able to solve so great a question to the satisfaction of any one.”

Having thus considered the chief doctrinal points in this book, we come to the Discourse on Dogma and Spirit, delivered at Andover.

We find in this Discourse the new ground which he would offer to the Unitarians. He concedes all they ever desired, in regard to doctrines and creeds. But, on the other hand, his platform is less welcome to them than that of Orthodoxy. In offering them mysticism in exchange for rationalism he may have calculated upon a meeting of extremes. But we cannot believe that they who have rejected the terms offered them by Swedenborg, Spinoza, and Parker, will find much that is new or

satisfactory in these essays. They agree with the Orthodox in these points which he abandons, — that thinking keeps pace with feeling, in religion; that truth revealed to the understanding is the basis of piety; that the highest truths of religion are capable of being arranged in a system; and, that we may “render to every man a reason of the hope that is in” us.

The point at issue between them and us, is, whether the things which are revealed in the Bible, and which may be ascertained by a fair interpretation of its language, are to be believed, on the authority of God; or are to be believed, or rejected, according to their agreement or disagreement with our independent reasoning. But instead of removing this obstacle to union, the Discourse adds another, still greater, as we understand it; which is, that of the direct and supernatural communication of the truth to the mind, even independently of revelation in language. One evidence of it is, that Dr. B. sets opinion and inward illumination in contrast with each other. In thus contrasting “opinion and life,” he says: “Opinions may be written down, or retained in the memory, while the realizations of faith and love and spirit cease and disappear, as they themselves do, unable either to be retained in the memory, or to be recalled, in any manner, afterwards. Spiritual truth dies with spiritual life.” “Perhaps I shall come nearest to an exact representation, if I say that spiritual truth is God Himself, dwelling in the soul and manifested there.” “The knowledge will abide” “no longer than the unction abides. And this, exactly, is the experience of every unfaithful disciple. His light perishes with his love.” “Even the scripture that was light, grows dark again.” Pp. 305, 306. It is the orthodox faith, that a divine illumination enables man spiritually to understand the Scripture; and that the withdrawment of that light obscures again the vision of those truths. But the truths may remain in the memory after the loss of this spiritual perception of them. And these very truths may again be so presented to the soul as instrumentally to restore that decayed spiritual life. “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” But in this passage from Dr. B., the truths contained in the Bible are mentioned only incidentally. The illumination seems to be effected independently of them. And when it is effected, nothing that may be an object of thought or memory in a state of declension, can be the instrument of that recovery.

This is the mysticism which we think Unitarians are not prepared to accept. And we know that the Orthodox regard this notion as the fundamental error of Quakerism and Quietism.

If then, he has not furnished a new stand-point for the Unitarians, what ground does he offer to the Orthodox? We answer, nothing new which they can regard as true; but only some old errors, and many truisms put in a false light. The professed object of the treatise is, to promote the true revival of religion. And the means is, to subject the dogma of religion to its spirit. But this is not new. Nor is there an idea in this discourse truly valuable, and bearing on this main point, which has not been stated a thousand times by orthodox writers. We may fall practically into an overestimate of creeds and theology, of ministerial talents, and of study as compared with devotion; but the orthodox churches, and ministers, and theological schools do not need to be addressed on this point, as if it were one in which their theory is wrong. And yet this is the burden of the Discourse. It assumes that we regard the opinions which are "prepared out of the mere life of nature," as constituting the vital truths of the gospel. If our author does not believe that to be the case, he is insincere; if he does, he is mistaken. But we give him the credit of sincerity in this matter; for we find him continually referring to the present false estimate of dogma as the great incubus, from which the church is to be delivered, for the coming of the great revival. He attributes to this excessive estimation of dogma, the decline of revivals, the sectarian character of all revivals, and the "desolating sweep of scepticism, connected with the Protestant church." Pp. 292, 293.

Now we affirm, that he utterly misapprehends the orthodox churches of America, at least in assuming that they need to be reasoned with on this point. That they need exhortation, we may admit. There is, then, no great result to be expected from this essay among the orthodox portion of the community. And here we might have dismissed the discourse as a weak attempt to produce a great change in the convictions of men. But it contains so many incidental errors and misstatements, and so many dangerous insinuations, that we cannot consent to part with it, without exposing at least a portion of them.

The doctrine of the work of Christ is stated in a most offensive form, and with the most ungenerous implications against the ortho-

dox belief in regard to it. The work of the Spirit is presented in such a manner as either to make inspiration fallible, or the private judgment of every "spiritual man," infallible. These points, however, are incidental. The main positions of the essay are these; that the highest religious truth is communicated immediately to the soul, and not by the medium of propositions, opinions, or language; that this arises from the nature of religious truth; and, that the history of Christianity confirms it. These positions need to be examined.

He maintains that religious truth is communicated immediately, and not through the medium of language. Dr. B.'s fundamental dogma is, Illumination without the word, — spiritual knowledge which can neither come into the form of definite conceptions, nor be framed into propositions and statements. If he should say, that he only means to condemn the notion that the understanding can originate spiritual ideas, — or that words can convey them to the heart, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, — then we reply that he needed not to write a book about it, for the orthodox portion of the community; nor to proclaim it as the harbinger of a new revival of religion. If he is not contending with a shadow, it is opinion in religion that he condemns, — though that opinion be the result of God's teaching and guiding the judgment; opinion like the whole book of Proverbs, like the first Psalm, and the Sermon on the Mount, like the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Hebrews, — opinion, such as Paul, in the name of Christ, bids us form, about the place which faith and works are to hold in justification. In every statement he has made, we admit there is a chance for evasion; and for maintaining that he only means to insist on the necessity of the divine influence to make spiritual truth intelligible. But if he takes that ground, we must regard him as an unfair reasoner, and an unsafe teacher. "Christianity," he says, "is called 'spirit,' partly because it can truly enter us and be apprehended by us, only as we are in it and of it, and have its spirit in us. The letter cannot teach it, words cannot tell us what it is." P. 303. This, taken with the Dissertation on Language, goes to shew that the main, though it be only the implied, dogma of this Discourse is, that even a spiritual man cannot have a religious opinion; much less, give utterance to it. We ask again, What is the Bible, if not a book of religious instruction, enabling

men to form opinions on all the great points of the existence of God and man ; of their moral relations ; of human duty, destiny, and redemption ? We further ask, What his own book is designed to effect ? Is it not intended to convey religion to the heart ? Nay, is it not an attempt to promote the very highest form of religion ? But how does he effect his purpose ? On his theory there ought not to be an opinion in it, nor even a word appreciable by the natural understanding of man. But instead of that, it is full of opinions in opposition to the opinions of the existing church, and the churches of the last fourteen centuries.

Our author asserts, that " words cannot tell us what Christianity is ; " (P. 303.) and he also denies " that theology, taken as a work of analysis and speculative generalization, is competent to produce a body of judgments that will be a true and proper science of God." Now in opposition to this, we insist that religion may become an object of thought or opinion.

Suppose it should be affirmed, that filial affection is so exclusively an exercise of the heart, that a child can have no opinions about his father, nor about his own affections, duties, and relations to his father ;—this would be an exact parallel to our author's position. The understanding cannot love, we all know ; but it is the medium through which the heart receives those conceptions of parental excellence, and of the filial relation, which fill it with its undefinable affections. *Specific* facts, as all agree, are the objects of opinion. Are there any specific facts in the Bible which form the objects of opinion ? And especially are there any facts revealed in the Scriptures, which go to nourish the life of piety ? For, if there are, then to believe them, is to have an opinion or dogma. For instance ; the Pantheist says, there is no personal God ; and that none such made the world. The spiritual man answers him in the common language of men ; exhibiting one of the profoundest mysteries of Christianity, and one of the most fundamental and life-nourishing truths : " In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." He has here asserted an opinion or dogma. And every adjective he employs in religion, and every verb, involves a proposition. The author seems to maintain, however, that every such proposition must contain " some decision of natural judgment." Indeed, thinking seems to be held by him in horror. He would seem to sweep away the possibility of thinking at all, and of holding a religious opinion in

opposition to error. A settled religious belief he appears to regard as the very "mystery of iniquity, out of which 'the man of sin' was born." P. 290.

We maintain, in opposition to our author's views, that there are, also, *general* facts, which are proper subjects of opinion. Such an one is this: Faith in Christ secures pardon. Is not that a general statement, an opinion, a religious opinion, a Scriptural opinion, a nutritive and vital opinion?

Opinion, also, may embrace logical deductions. The question may be thus stated: Are there no specimens of reasoning in the Scripture? and is it not legitimate to infer from its facts in a logical manner? As a specimen, we may cite this; God's care for the ravens justifies the conclusion that he will take care of us. This is logic, — in a simple form indeed, — but it is logic; and it is employed by the great Teacher himself. If Dr. Bushnell's theory is true, such conclusions ought never to have come through the "incrustations" of logical forms, but by direct inspiration. But where is the wisdom of forbidding us to "compare spiritual things with spiritual," which is a logical process? While the example and authority of the Scriptures make the holding of right opinions proper, and even obligatory, our author finds in it the great cause of the decline of revivals. And to believe him, we have only to cease from using our understandings in the closet, in the pulpit, and in the pew, and the glorious predicted day will have come. For, after describing the triumphs of the gospel under the apostolic labors, he adds: "Many speak of this event as a wonder. In one view it is. But something like it will always appear, when religion casts off the incrustations of dogma, and emerges into life." P. 285. He ascribes the first decline of religion to its encountering the Greek philosophy, and coming under the control of system. And he afterwards sums up "this protracted statement," by intimating, that "results of so great consequence are hanging on the reduction or displacement of dogma." P. 299.

It is, moreover, obvious that the specific and general facts of revelation, and logical deductions therefrom, may be justly expressed in language. Besides his thorough denunciation of language in the Introductory Dissertation, Dr. B. tells us here, that when "we dwell in the light," we dwell "in the stillness, so to speak, of the light of God; for light is a silent element."

P. 309. And it is a fair inference from all his views of spiritual illumination, that words cannot utter it from man, any more than to him. And yet we are told in a passage, quoted too by himself, that there are "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

Our author's second argument is historical. But it is so entirely made up of assertion and insinuation, that we need not weary the reader with an exposition of its fallacy. He has cited the leading epochs of Christianity to sustain his dogma, that dogmas have done all the mischief in the church; that the power of Christ, of the apostles, and of Luther, lay very much in their not proclaiming doctrines! Think of Luther, and the opening of his campaign with more than ninety theses nailed to the old church door at Wittemberg! Think of our Lord, and his sublime generalizations of spiritual truth; of John, and his declaration of Christ's person and work; of Paul, and his reasonings with the Romans and the Hebrews; and then turn to hear it declared that opinions or doctrines have crushed revivals, and hindered reformations. This book virtually affirms that the church of Christ was not founded on revealed truth; that Christ did not direct men to search the Scriptures that they might form their opinions; that Paul did not think much of doctrinal differences, although he pronounced him to be accursed who should preach any other gospel; and that we must cease studying, and give ourselves up to passive meditation on nothing, like the oriental quietists.

Our next objection to this writer is, that he compromises and betrays the cause of truth, by the view he takes of our ecclesiastical separation from the Unitarians. So long as the Orthodox body retain their present convictions, his position must be regarded as an abandonment of the gospel to its enemies. His language is:

"The manner in which dogmatism necessitates division may be well enough illustrated by the mournful separation which has taken place in the New England churches. Had we been embodied in the simple love of God under some such badge, for example, as the apostles' creed, it is very probable to me that the causes of the division would never have existed. But we had an article which asserted a metaphysical trinity, and this made the assertion of a metaphysical unity inevitable; nay, more, even desirable. So we had a theory of atonement, another of depravity, another of regeneration, or the ingeneration of character, which required the appearance, so to speak, of antagonistic theories." P. 338.

So the real cause of the Unitarian heresy is, not any depravity of men's hearts, but the systematic thinking of the Orthodox divines. And, it is "even desirable," if we will reduce our knowledge to order, that other men should believe and proclaim falsehood. And the Unitarians are not nearly so deserving of blame in this whole matter, as the Orthodox. Certainly Dr. Bushnell cannot ask us to recognize him as a true and faithful minister of Christ's gospel, if he is to place all the heresy of the great declension in New England at the door of the friends of that gospel. We do not seek in these remarks to convince him or any other person; but simply to express our opinion of his position.

This essay on Dogma we regard, partly as a circuitous and clumsy exhibition of the truism, that the acts of the understanding are not the exercises of the heart, and must not be substituted for them; and partly as an unsustained psychology, asserting, but not proving, that truth is perceptible by the heart, and cannot be shaped into propositions, which are formulas of the understanding.

An inconsistency between the theory and practice of Dr. B. on the subject of dogma remains to be noticed. He severely assails the dogmatism of others; yet few writers are more intensely dogmatic than he. Indeed, his zeal in exploding existing dogmas seems to be designed simply to prepare the way for others of his own. Those who have read with any care his successive publications, will easily discover that he is, step by step, developing a new theory of the universe, based on peculiar views, held by him, of the necessary limitations of all created minds, and the consequent origin of sin. He has not yet fully brought out all parts of his system; but there is no difficulty in stating its prominent outlines. In doing this, we deem it perfectly proper to illustrate from his other works, the radical theory which runs through these volumes, and which imparts a coloring to all his modes of thought.

The theory is, that an experiment of evil, and therefore a fall and bondage under the laws of evil, is, to all moral beings, a necessary part of a spiritual education, from the very nature of a new-created, inexperienced, and limited mind. This theory is developed, on P. 239, and is also set forth in his work on "Christian Nurture" in the following terms: "Spiritual education, or what is the same, probation, that which trains

a being for stable intelligent virtue hereafter, would involve an experiment of evil, therefore a fall and bondage under the laws of evil." This he says on the supposition that a child were even to be "born as clear of natural prejudice or damage as Adam was before his sin."

An experiment in sin, therefore, is a necessary part of all finished spiritual education. This principle is pregnant with most important consequences. The church has in all ages believed in the doctrine of holy angels who never fell, but have been confirmed in good without a previous experiment of evil. This, according to the dogma of Dr. Bushnell, must be dismissed as inconsistent with the nature of spiritual education or probation. Many readers of the work on Christian Nurture saw that it tended to this result; but did not suppose that Dr. Bushnell had contemplated it, and was prepared to admit and defend it. But, in this work, he waxes bold, and casts the whole doctrine of angels into those "immense masses of theologic rubbish," which "must ultimately disappear." P. 314.

From this fruitful root he also derives the necessity of that development of God which is made in the atonement, as a means of breaking the power of evil, and extricating man from that bondage into which he always falls. P. 240.

It is also plain that those developments of God which Dr. B. calls personations, and in which his trinity consists, are designed to gain the same end; that is, to extricate man from that state of bondage to evil, into which all created minds fall as a necessary part of a finished spiritual education. And it is curious to remark that the process in each case is substantially the same, namely, dramatizing some being or event, so as to make them appear to be what they are not. In the case of the Absolute Deity, he is dramatized by being set forth in finite forms; which, just so far as they are finite, do not truly represent him at all, but leave him in reality just as entirely unknown as he was before. The Trinity, therefore, is a dramatizing of God, for the sake of our minds, so as to make him appear to be what he is not. The atonement is also a dramatizing of the death of Christ, for the sake of our minds, so as to make it appear to be a real sin-offering, when in fact it is no such thing.

Nor is this the limit of the operation of Dr. Bushnell's radical theory as to the origin of sin, its necessity as a means of spiritual

education, and the mode of recovering a fallen mind from its power. It entirely controls his views on the subject of the fall of Adam and of his posterity, and the mode of their restoration through Christian nurture.

What, then, according to Dr. B., was the fall in Adam? Not the fact that man came into a fallen state because of his sin; for the same would have happened if he had not sinned; but simply an augmented predisposition to sin, bodily and mental, transmitted to his posterity according to well known physical laws, — and in addition to this, organic family influences, anterior to responsible and individual agency. These things, according to Dr. B., exhaust the idea of the fall. In it there is no special mystery; it is the obvious result of common physiological and moral laws. And as these laws may work in either direction, it follows that the effect of the fall may be increased or diminished by a course of measures adapted to a given result under those laws.

Out of these views grows his peculiar theory of Christian nurture, concerning which so much has been said. It is not a theory as to a mode of avoiding sin; inasmuch as an experience in sin, is necessary to the finished education of children. It is simply a mode of removing, through parents and the family, the additional proclivity to sin resulting from the fall of Adam; so that children shall be restored, for all practical purposes, to a state similar to that in which Adam, or any other being, might have been before his fall. This is a state in which there shall be developed, from the first, a love of the right for its own sake, as a basis of the struggle with evil into which it is necessary for all to fall, in order to have an experience of evil as well as of good.

According to the theory, neither Adam nor any being was in a better state than this, anterior to the commencement of moral agency; and to a state as good as this, a child may, through his parents, be brought. For first, by a holy line of ancestry, constitutional predispositions to evil may be much diminished; and secondly, by organic family influences, anterior to intelligent individual agency, he may be so set forth as to begin moral action with a preponderating love of the right and the true for their own sake.

Dr. B.'s dogmatic decisions, then, relate to the following points: The origin of evil in all races and all worlds; — The operation of the fall of Adam; — The method of reversing the influences of

the fall, so that, through parents, children shall be restored for all practical purposes, to a state similar to that of Adam before the fall; — The nature of the absolute and unrevealed Divinity, and his mode of revealing himself by dramatizing himself as being what he is not; — The mode of extricating the mind, by these and similar dramatizings from that entanglement in sinful habits and courses, into which all minds from the laws of their nature, necessarily fall; — And, the mode of representing dramatically, an atonement which has no existence, in such a way that it may affect the mind like reality, and thus aid still farther in delivering it from its necessary involution in sin.

Now whether his views on all these points are true or false, they are abundantly dogmatic. Nor does he, nor do we, find that language is inadequate to state his dogmatism. A creed could be constructed out of materials furnished by Dr. B., as systematic as the creed of the Council of Trent, or that of the Synod of Dort.

The effect, too, of his fundamental theory of the origin of evil, is to degrade our conceptions of the nature of finite minds, and of the system of moral government over such minds, and to lessen our abhorrence of sin as in its nature inexcusably malignant. God can do no better in this, or in any other world, or in any period of time, than to create beings, the necessities of whose education must lead them through the regions of moral pollution and folly, in order to learn the worth of purity and wisdom.

This sweeping away of the great doctrine of unfallen angels, and of the devil and his angels, as commonly held, has not indeed been performed at full length. Our author has simply set them aside among "theologic rubbish," to be disposed of at his future leisure. The system carried out to its natural results would sweep away with these, the doctrine of future eternal punishment. On this point, certainly, language is capable of stating a definite doctrine; but, as Dr. Bushnell has not pronounced upon it, we wait for his next "utterances." It is no less evident that the theory of the Absolute Being, upon which his doctrine of the Trinity is based, tends to practical Atheism in the same mode that Pantheism does. For the revelations of God, of which our author says so much, all amount in reality to nothing. He says: "We can never come into the knowledge of God, save as God is brought within our finite molds of action." And yet, so far as he comes into these finite molds, the Absolute Deity, according to this writer, is not

truly represented, but misrepresented. P. 144. We are, therefore, no nearer to knowing him than before. Ritter, in his account of Xenophanes, the celebrated Eleatic philosopher, exhibits the natural result of such views: "Seeing that man is forced to represent to himself the individual, and also being ignorant how the cognition of individual phenomena could lead to a knowledge of the Deity, he found himself in a painful position; desiring, on the one hand, to arrive at a knowledge of God, who is the truth; and, on the other, forced to look to individuals, — in and by themselves truthless appearances." The fact is, that if the human mind is not so made in the image of God, that the ideas of knowledge, choice, ends, plans, purposes, love, wisdom, law, obligation, government, etc., derived from it, do truly reveal God, then God is, and ever must be, to us, an unknown God. If these do reveal him to us, then Dr. Bushnell's whole theory, as to the absolute divinity and the mode of his revelation, is false; and tends, in its results, to practical Atheism. The same tendency to undermine all religious belief, lurks in his theory of an atonement, which is a mere dramatizing of a non-entity. It tends to produce a feeling that all religion is a mere trick; or, as in the Romish Church, a mere matter of dramatic display.

It is also worthy of particular notice, that the foundation of this theory, is laid, not in Scripture, but in philosophical assumptions, of which no proof is given, but incessant assertion. For example, the passage on Pp. 137–139, setting forth God as the Absolute Being, to be revealed, which is the basis of his whole theory of the Trinity, has not in it the slightest Scriptural element. It is merely philosophical dogmatism of the boldest kind. And in general, though he weaves in, here and there, portions of the Word of God, as if to impart a Scriptural hue and authority to his philosophical theories, and thus gain them a more ready reception, yet beyond all doubt the main elements of his system are pure rationalism. No theory was ever started upon philosophic grounds, so wild but that some portions of the Word of God could be introduced into it, at least by forced interpretation, to give it plausibility. But such portions can be easily detached, and the system suffer no loss; but still stand on its peculiar basis, as a system of rationalizing dogmatism.

As we close this review, a feeling of sadness steals over us, at the occasion furnished for the remarks which we have been

compelled to make. We have set forth the proofs afforded by this volume, that the author, a professed minister of reconciliation between God and man, is Pantheistic in his notions of the divine existence ; that he ridicules the doctrine of two natures in the person of Christ ; that he denies the truth of a Trinity in the Godhead ; that he discards the doctrine of vicarious atonement by the sufferings and death of Christ ; and that he teaches other pernicious errors.

These demolitions of the truths of God's Word are like the doings of some Israelite, who should intrude "into the things which he had not seen" in the tabernacle of the testimony ; and "being puffed up in his fleshly mind," should tear open the vail, interline the tables of stone, try his knife on Aaron's rod, and throw a handful of the manna to the fowls. There is scarcely any thing sacred in divine truth and Christian experience, which this author has not treated with a familiarity that disturbs our feelings. True, it is done with an air of seriousness, and protestations of zeal for progress, and with much power of composition ; which, with many, will atone for all that is exceptionable in the book. But the splendors of rhetoric, and the solemn chants of a mystical pietism, can make no compensation for such destructive errors, which leave theology in ruins. When the very "first principles of the doctrine of Christ" are abjured, we see not how a religious teacher can do otherwise than to impose on himself, and his hearers, the workings of imagination for the motions of divine grace, and the flashes of fancy for the visions of faith. The most venturous soarings of religious sentimentalism will fall very far short of the threshold of heaven ; and well deserve the remark of that Puritan knight, Sir Benjamin Rudyard, on the mystical preaching of one of Cromwell's chaplains : "It is too high for this world, and too low for the other." Even Coleridge could, at one time, lament the disastrous effect upon his spiritual health, of "delving in the unwholesome quicksilver mines" of German mysticism ; and, at another time, complain of being bewildered "in the holy jungle of transcendental metaphysics." We know that it enfeebled his will, so that it could finish nothing that it began, and could conquer no temptation. Such mournful examples give great force to the inspired warning : "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit."

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